

Makers of Indian Literature
SIVAGNAANA MUNIVAR

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1. Variform Saivism

"Arumanitthadam poonmulai Arambayar Arulippaadiyar,
Urimaiyil tozhuvaar, Urutthira Palganatthaar
Virisadai Viratikal, Anthanar, Saivar, Paasupathar, Kaapaalikall
Teruvinil poliyum Tiruvaaroor Ammaane."

The above verse of St.Tirunaavukkarasar -- more popularly known as St. Appar --, is descriptive of the religious climate of Tamil Nadu during the seventh century. This verse hails the glory of the presiding deity of Tiruvaaroor thus :

"Behold the Lord-God of Tiruvaaroor in whose streets
Celestial danseuses whose immense breasts
Are adorned with invaluable gems,
Hymnodists, privileged worshippers,
Multitudinous Rudra-Ganas, (Maha-) Vritis of spreading
Matted hair, Brahmins, Saivas, Paasupatas
And Kaapaalikas thrive in splendour!"

Hearing of the coming of St.Tirugnaanasambandhar, the servitors of Tirukkaalatthi fared forth to receive him. Among them were *Kaapaalikas* as well as multifarious Saivas of variform Saivism (*Kaapaala-k-Kaiyar pala Vedacchaivar*)¹

In the verse of St.Appar's quoted above, the adherents of variform Saivism are listed. '*Urutthira palganatthaar*' it is said, are *Kaalaamukhas*. It is true that this identification is disputed.² For our purpose, we take it that the *Kaalaamukhas* too are included in the enumeration by St.Appar. Besides these Saivites, other kinds of Saivites, such as the adherents of Kashmir Saivism, Vira Saivism, Golaki Mata Saivism and Bhairavas, also flourished in harmony, in the various parts of India that is Bharat, notwithstanding their apparent cultural remoteness. The truth to be remembered in this context is that Saivism is but one though its forms are multitudinous. 'It sprouted and stood as one eventually growing ramiferous' (*ondraai mulaitthu ezhunthu etthanaiyo kavadu vittu*)³ are the words of St. Maanickavaachakar. This is elucidatory of the Vedic af-

firmation which says : "*Ekam Sat vipraah bhahudha vadanti*" (Truth is but one though apprehended in many ways).

Of variform Saivism, a scholar is expected to have some knowledge. The various Saivites, according to St. Appar, are: (1) Privileged worshippers (aadi Saivas), (2) Maha-Vritis, (3) Brahmins, (4) Saivas, (5) Paasupatas, (6) Kaapaalikas and (7) Bhairavas.

1. Aadi Saivas

These alone are privileged to enter the adytum, touch the icon of Siva or the Linga, bathe it ritualistically, clothe it, adorn it and perform unto it the *archana*. These are the temple-priests. In Tamil-Nadu, none else -- not even the Brahmins --, are endowed with these privileges. These privileged Saivites are called *Aadi-Saivas* (the original Saivites), and these alone can perform *Paraartha Pooja* (the pooja performed on behalf of worshippers) to Lord Siva. They strictly adhere to the rules and regulations prescribed by the *Saivaagamas*. They are therefore called *Siva-Brahmins* or *Sivaachaaryas*. St. Sundarar, himself a *Sivaachaarya*, affirmed thus : "*Muppothum Tirumeni theenduvaarkkum Adiyen*"⁶ (I am a servitor of them that touch (and perform *archana*) to the holy person of Siva, during the three divisions of the day).

The rituals etc., to be performed in a particular Siva- temple, should conform to that Aagama governing the shrine. For instance, the Big Temple at Thanjavur has as its Aagama the *Makutaagama* and it is this Aagama which guides the conduct of the rituals, festivals etc., of the Big Temple. Though all the major Aagas are, more or less, of equal value, yet the rituals etc., of a specific temple must conform to the rules and regulations of its Aagama. So, varied and many are the groups of *Sivaachaaryas* and each group should stand well-drilled in its own chosen discipline as taught by its Aagama. These Aadi-Saivas enjoy a very high status, according to the Aagas. These are next only to the Anaadi Saiva who is Siva Himself. It is rather regrettable that the present-day Aadi-Saivas are unaware of their own glory and greatness. The modern society is also to blame. It is dead to the Aagama-conferred status of the *Sivaachaaryas*. However, it is very reassuring to witness the ever-during greatness of the Tillai priests who maintain their status and dignity as the *Archakas* of Lord Siva.

2. Maha-Vritis

Maha-Vrita means : "the great vow". A *Maha-Vratin* is one who observes the great vow. Indeed, he observes a cluster of vows of extraordinary nature. He eats his food from out of a human skull. Lord Siva

who is proud of His mendicancy goes about seeking alms, with a skull. "*Kai ore Kapaalatthar*"⁶ (He holds a skull in His hand) are the words of St.Appar. The Maha-Vratin emulates Siva in this and other respects. The Maha-Vratin besmears his body with the ashes of the crematory. Lord Siva is referred to by St.Sambandhar as "*Kaadudaiiya sudalai-p-podi Poosi*"⁶ (the one who is bedaubed with the ashes of the Crematorium). St.Appar also refers to Siva as One who is daubed with the ashes of the burnt corpses of the Crematorium (*Savam thaangku Mayanathucchaambal.... Tharithaan*).⁷ He also declares that, for the (Maha-) Vratin, the ash of the gutted corpses is a beautiful adornment (*Ventha neeru arungkalam Virathikatku ellaam*).⁸ The Maha-Vrati wears a strand of human hair as his sacred thread. This is called *Panchavati*. St.Appar calls it '*mayirrkayiru*'⁹ (strand of (human) hair). The following description of Lord Siva in the guise of a Maha-Vratin is met with in St.Sekkizhaar's Periya Puranam.

"Triple stripes of Holy Ash flashed from His forehead;
The tuft on His tonsured head was decked with
A wreath of bone-beads; His ears bore dangling *Kundala*
Wrought of pearls very like the ones carved
Out of the skeleton of the one He bore on His person.

"He wore a long dangling chain of bright beads
Of that bone; instead of the fierce serpent whose mouth
Holds sacs of poison, He wore a band on His shoulders;
For His sacred thread He wore a strand of human hair;
He also had a pouch of the Holy Ash that could end
The cycle of birth and death of pure-hearted devotees.

"He wore on one wrist a thread which held a bone-bead;
Over his *Kovanam* woven of the rare Vedas, He wore
A fitting and beauteous garment; His ineffable feet
Did touch the earth and on the soles thereof, were (visible)
The divine pentad of signs.

"His frame divine was smeared thick with the Holy Ash;
It was like unto the ashes veiling the burning fire within;
Passing through the streets where streamers wafted
He entered the house divine of Maanakkanjaarar
Whose heart enshrines His cool lotus-feet divine."¹⁰

3. Brahmins

Among Brahmins there were and are those who adore Lord Siva only as the supreme deity. It was Sankara Bhagawad Paada who brought about

a revolution whereby almost all Brahmins became *Smaartas*. These follow the great Aacharya in his sacred footsteps. Sankaraacharya is hailed as the "*Shanmatha Sthaapaka*" (the Establisher/the Re-organizer of the six faiths), namely *Saivism*, *Vaishnavism*, *Saaktam*, *Gaanaapathyam*, *Kaumaaram* and *Sauram*. The pursuit of any one of these faiths, according to Sankaraacharya, spells salvation. Before his advent, there were Brahmins who owed allegiance wholly, solely and exclusively to Siva. Of St.Sambandhar's parents, St.Sekkizhaar says that their respective lineages were poised only in the Saivaite faith "*Marabu irandum Saiva Neri Vazhi Vantha Kenmaiyyinaar*"¹¹ are the words of St.Sekkizhaar. They knew nought but the feet twain of the Lord of matted hair who is adorned with serpents (*Aravanintha Sadaimudiyar Adi alaal Ariyaa(r)*).¹² They fostered love for the Holy Ash (*Tiruneetru anbupaalik-kum*).¹³

Appayya Dikshitar, Neelakanta Dikshitar and their spiritual descendants as well as those that hail from the clan of Hara Datta are Brahmins who adore Siva and none else, as the supreme deity.

4. Saivas

According to *Varnaasrama Chandrika*, a work indited by Sri la Sri Tiruvambala Desikar -- the seventh pontiff of the Dharmapuram Aadhi-nam --, there are seven types of Saivites, they being (1) Anaadi Saiva, (2) Aadi Saiva, (3) Maha Saiva, (4) Anu-Saiva, (5) Avaantara Saiva (6) Pravara Saiva and (7) Antiya Saiva. We know that Anaadi Saiva is Lord Siva. Aadi Saivas are Sivaacharyas. Maha Saivas are Maha Brahmins who are solely dedicated to Lord Siva. Anu- Saiva is either a Kshatriya or a Vaisya owning Lord Siva alone as the supreme God. Avaantara Saiva is a Sudra who adores Siva only. Ilayaankudi Maara Naayanaar and Vaayilaar Naayanaar are Avaantara Saivas.¹⁴ Pravara Saiva has a mixed origin. All other Saivas are known as Anthiya Saivas. Of these, the first four are the twice-born. A Sudra also becomes a twice-born, once he receives *deeksha* (initiation).

A saivite by birth becomes a true Saivite only when he receives initiation. On initiation he transcends the limitations of caste, upbringing etc. Even as the fuel that feeds the fire loses its name as tree, the caste-distinctions get burnt on initiation.

All Saivas are Saiva Siddhantins. In this context the observations of David N.Lorenzen can be seen to be meaningful. He says: "The word 'Saivite' and 'Saiva' are distinguished. The former is applied to anyone who specifically worships the god Siva, the latter to a Saivite who follows Saiva Siddhanta."¹⁵

5. Paasupatas

We know little about the philosophical doctrines of Kaapaalikam, Bhairavam, Mahavratam and Kaalaamukham. However this is not entirely the case with Paasupatam. We can learn a few vital facts from the Paasupata Sutas and the commentary thereon by Kaundinya. This faith claims that Siva incarnated as Nakulisa and authored the Paasupata Sutas. The commentator Kaundinya might have flourished between the fourth and the sixth centuries. Surendranath Das Gupta is of the opinion that not much can be gleaned by way of philosophy from either the Sutas or the Bhasya.¹⁶ These deal with rituals or 'rather modes of life'. It should be observed in this context that the *Naiyaayika* shares his theistic conviction with the Paasupata Saiva. The difference between these two schools can be briefly stated as follows. The Paasupata school lays emphasis on rituals. The *Naiyaayika*, on the other hand, is more concerned with a logical presentation of the system.

The pentad of subjects discussed by the Paasupata school comprises Kaarya (effect), Kaarana (cause), Yoga (meditation), Vidhi (behaviour / deportment) and Dukhaanta (annihilation of misery). This school maintains that liberation comes through the grace of Siva. The word 'pasu' includes all animate beings. However saints and highly evolved persons are not to be deemed as pasu. Pasu's impotence is the *raison d'être* of its bondage. It is connected with 'paasa' which means 'cause and effect'. According to Kaundiinya, deliverance is not obtained through *Gnaana* (knowledge), *Vairagya* (discrimination), *Dharma* and *Aisvarya-tyaga* (surrender of myrific powers) but by *prasaada* (grace of Siva).

6. Kaapaalikas

No Kaapaalika opus explicatory of the faith is extant. The bed-rock of Kaapaalika faith is bhakti (devotion to God). This bhakti is fostered in utter ignorance of the ways of the world. The Kaapaalika's bhakti is grounded in personal devotion to a personal god who in his case is LORD SIVA. The very rituals of the Kaalika help his foster his communion with his chosen deity. The devotee in course of time gains siddhi-s (occult powers) and in the end is freed from transmigration. He eventually dwells in a heaven of sempiternal sexual bliss.

The Kaapaalikas constitute a Tantric sect. Their way of life is expressed by a pentad of 'Ma-s' (*panchamakara*)..¹⁷ *Panchamakara*, *panchadravya* and *panchatattva* are synonyms in Tantric texts. The five 'Ma-s' are *madhu* (liquor), *maamsa* (meat), *mathsya* (fish), *maithuna* (sexual union) and *mudra* (grain).

Kulaarnava-Tantra V. 79-80 says: "Wine (sura) is Sakthi, meat is Siva; the enjoyer of these is Bhairava Himself." According to Mahanirvaana-Tantra, wine is Taara Herself in liquid form. She is the Saviour of beings, the Mother of Enjoyment and Liberation. The Kaapaalika Unmattha-Bhairava, according to Lorenzen, affirms thus: "The bliss which becomes manifest through sexual union is the (true) form of Bhairava. The attainment of that (bliss) at death is *moksha*. This is the ultimate truth."¹⁸

The Kaapaalikas thrived very well in Tamil Nadu too. The temple at Mylapore is known as Kaapaaleeccharam. The Tevaaram-Trio hail Siva as Kaapaali. Siva is referred to as 'Kaapaaliyar' in a hymn on Anbilalanthurai. In the verse on Tirutthurutti and Tiruvelvikkudi beginning with the words: "Vangilar mathyamum," Siva is referred to as 'Kaapaaliyaar' by St. Sambandhar. In his hymn on Valampuram, St. Sundarar hails Siva as Kapaali.

7. Kaalaamukhas

Kaalaamukha means 'black face'. In his 'Elements of Hindu Iconography,' (II part 1, 25) T.A. Gopinath Rao says that this sect perhaps adhered to the practice of marking their foreheads with black streaks. This sect found a congenial soil in Karnataka. These formed themselves into an assemblage called *Sakthi-parishad*. They were in charge of temple administration. Lorenzen says that approximately sixty five inscriptions from eighteen Sakthi-parishad temples were discovered and published.

In his work "Rajaraja I," K.T. Tirunaavukkarasu says: "Sannyasins of Kaapaalikam, Paasupatam and Kaalaamukham which are sects of North Indian Saivism, flourished in those days, in Tamil Nadu. They were generally referred to as Siva-yogis. Among Saivites, the sect of Kaalaamukhas wielded great influence. Some of the Kaalaamukha yogis administered the *nibhandas* (endowments) gifted to the Siva-temples."¹⁹

Tirunaavukkarasu also refers to the following facts. During the reign of Paraantaka Chozha-II, the prince of Kodumbaloor called Vikramakesari built in his capital 'The Temple of the Trio'. He also built a matam later. Kodumbaloor Velaar appointed Vidyaraasi -- a North Indian Guru of Atreya Gotra --, as the head of that matam. Vidyaraasi was well-versed in the Vedas. He was a staunch Kaalaamukha.²⁰ His followers thrived well in the various parts of Tamil Nadu during the reign of Rajaraja-I.²¹

The Kaalaamukhas, according to Ramanuja the Vaishnavite saint, are also called Mahavratadhaaras. Their ways were perhaps similar to those of Mahavratins. According to A.V. Subbiah -- the author of the essay: "A

twelfth century University In Mysore", the Kaalaamukhas hailed from Kashmir. An inscription of A.D. 1147 seems to support this view.²² A great many inscriptions gathered by B.L.Rice are incorporated in *Epigraphia Carnatica*. A Sanskrit inscription of Kodumbaloor is proof positive of the prevalence of the Kaalaamukha faith in Tamil Nadu.²³

The link between the Virasaiva and the Kaalaamukhas is indisputable. Establishment of matams systematically organized and propagation of Linga worship characterise these cults. The tie between the two was stronger in the pre- Basavan period.

The latter-day Kaalaamukhas were not anti-Vedic at all. They cultivated the Vedas with great care. Their former rigorous practices also softened with the passage of time.

In the past, Tamil Nadu -- celebrated for its tolerance --, was the Home of variform *Saivism*.

NOTES

1. Periya Puranam : The Puranam of Tirugnaanasambandha Naayanaar, Verse 1018, Samajam Edition (1950).
2. The Fourth Tirumurai, verse 200, Foot-Note 3 at Page 177, Dharmapuram Aadhinam, 1957.
3. Verse 8, Tirukkotthumbi, Tiruvaachakam.
4. Verse 10, Tirutthondaththokai, The Seventh Tirumurai.
5. Verse 7, decad 9 of Tirumurai the sixth.
6. Verse 1, decad 1 of Tirumurai the first.
7. Verse 2, decad 50 of Tirumurai the sixth.
8. Verse 5, Namasivaaya Patikam, Tirumurai the fourth.
9. Verse 2, decad 50 of Tirumurai the sixth.
10. Verses 22 to 25 of the Puranam of Maanakkanjaarar, St.Sekkizhaar's Periya Puranam, translated by T.N.Ramachandran, Tamil University, Thanjavur (1990).
11. Verse 17, The Puranam of Tirugnaanasambandha Naayanaar.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Pages Ixxii and Ixxiii, St.Sekkizhaar's Periya Puranam translated by T.N.Ramachandran, Tamil University.
15. Page xiv, the Kapalikas and Kalamukhas by David N. Lorenzen, University of California Press, Indian Edition - 1972 (New Delhi).
16. Page 130, A History of Indian Philosophy - Volume V, by Surendranath Dasgupta, Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi, 1975.
17. Page 89-Lorenzen.
18. Page 91, Ibid.
19. Muthalaam Rajaraja Chozhan by K. T. Tirunaavukkarasu, Tamil Nadu Text Book Society (1975), Pages 259-60.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Page 108, Lorenzen.
23. The Kodumbaloor Inscriptions of Vikramakesari, JORM, VII, 1- 10, Edited by K.A.N.Sastri.

2. Saiva Siddhantam

Saiva Siddhantam is the Saivism of Tamil Nadu. The Sanskrit Vedas as interpreted by the Saiva Agamas and the Dravida Vedas -- in particular the Tevaaram and the Tiruvaachakam --, are its foundation. It is systematised in a general way by St.Tirumoolar in his Tirumantiram. Fourteen are the sastras which enunciate Saiva Siddhantam. These are called 'Meikanta Sastras' and they are all in Tamil. No wonder Saiva Siddhantam is now hailed as Tamil Saivism. The crest-jewel of these works is Sivagnaana Bhodam.¹ The author of this work is St.Meikantaar. Maybe it is a translation of the Sanskrit Sivagnaana Bodham. Many think that it is the Sanskrit work which is a translation. "Linguistically, the problem is unsettled, for, as M.Balasubramanya Mudaliyar says: "A decision on this question, acceptable to all parties, has yet to be made."² It must be remembered in any case, however, that Meikanta was more than a translator (if he was one at all). His divisions and his comments are entirely original. It may likewise be said that, if his work is a translation, the translation is by far a greater masterpiece than the original itself'.³ The Tamil Sivagnaana Bhodam is at once celebrated for its terseness and clarity. His method of treatment is perfect perfection. Lucidity and logic are his forte.

What is Saiva Siddhantam? Why is it called the end of ends? Why is it hailed as "the apex of logical reasoning, the system which is proved and finally upheld, although, the various religions are like steps in a ladder without which the ladder will be useless?"⁴ Why is it to be regarded as the very summation of spiritual thinking? The reasons are not far to seek.

Suddha-Maya is the field. Thence grew up the tree of Vedas. This tree is endowed with leaves, shoots, buds, blooms and fruits -- both green and ripe. *Yaagas* (sacrifices) intended for personal benefit, deeds for self-aggrandisement, thaumaturgic mantras etc., are prescribed in the Vedas. Indeed the Vedas suffer the performance of these for the gradual upliftment of the Souls. Souls which have just set foot on the highway of evolution crave for personal benefits. These look up to the *Karma-Kaanda* for securing such benefits. The contents of the Karma-Kaanda are like unto the leaves, shoots, buds and blooms of the Vedic Tree. The

peak of the Vedas is the Vedaanta, otherwise known as the *Gnaana-Kaanda*. The ripe and luscious fruits that adorn the lofty branches of the Vedic Tree constitute the Vedaanta. The juice of these fruits is indeed Saiva Siddhanta. Thus spake St.Kumara Gurupara.⁵

An old venpaa says:" The Vedas are the cow. The Aagamas are its milch. The hymns of the Four (namely St.Tirugnaanasambandhar, St.Tirunaavukkarasar, St. Sundarar and St.Maanickavaachakar) are the ghee churned out of the milk. Sivagnaana Bhodam is the toothsome relish of that ghee."

The philosophy as well as the metaphysics of Saiva Siddhanta is contained in the three words -- Sivam, Gnaanam and Bhodam. Sivam is the End of Science, the Ultimate of Philosophy and the Absolute of Metaphysics. Gnaanam which is Gnosis is the Knowledge leading to Sivam. Bhodam is the realisation and the experiencing of that knowledge. Mere faith is not Bhodam. It is realisation, unclouded illumination, flawless enlightenment, unalloyed and unending bliss which is ineffable.

Saiva Siddhanta proceeds on the footing that every religion has a place in the schema of evolution. Each is a rung in the ladder, and a necessary one at that, Life is a growth from truth to Truth. As Thackery says : "Life is the soul's nursery, the training place for the destinies of eternity,"

A good grounding in Sanskrit will be of immense help in understanding Saiva Siddhanta. A scholar who is well versed in English can also learn it as he has the good fortune to live during the time when many English opuses⁶ on Siddhantam are available.

The quintessence of Saiva Siddhantam stands distilled in a single verse of Tirumantiram which is as follows :⁷

"Pati, Pasu and Paasam are the three;
Pasu and Paasam like Pati are beginningless;
Paasam prevents Pasu's reaching Pati;
If they be oned, Paasam ceases to be."

Pati (the Lord-God Siva), Pasu (the soul) and Paasam (the fettering rope/shackles) are the three uncreated eternal categories. They never go out of existence. If Pasu is oned with Pati, Paasam ceases to be (Paasam). This only means that so far as the freed soul is concerned, the sway/hold/grip of Paasam on the liberated soul is absolutely ineffective. Paasam like Pati and Pasu is unannihilable.

Paasam is Asat; Pati is Sat; Pasu is Sat-Asat. Pasu has no independent status. It is '*Saarnthathan Vannam*.' It is what it is attached to. If it is

companied with Paasam, it is under the latter's sway. If it is with God, it acquires godly excellence. Paasam is not the subject of redemption. Pati is the grantor of redemption. It is the Pasu fettered by Paasam which is in need of deliverance. After salvation Pasu does not become Pati, though it becomes Pati-like. Soul can never become God. 'Aham Brahmaasmi' (I am/become God) is blasphemy of the worst type in Saiva Siddhantam. Lucifer became Satan, because "He trusted to have equal'd the Most High."⁸

The Lord is Sat (Truth). Sat is also Cit (Gnosis/Wisdom/Pure intelligence). Cit is Aananda (Unending Bliss). The Lord is therefore Sat-Cit-Aananda. This indeed is His swarupalakshana (innate nature). In His *tatastha-lakshana* (manifested state), the Lord is in advaitic relationship with His creation. This relationship is a synthesis of the triad, namely *abheda* (non- difference), *bheda* (difference) and *bhedaabheda* (difference cum non-difference). These three are indicated in Tamil by the words *ondraai*, *veraai* and *udanaai*.

Truly speaking the Lord is beyond name and form. Yet we are permitted to hail Him in names and forms. St.Maanicavaachakar says:

"To Him Who hath nor name nor form
We sing, the while hailing His thousand sacred names."

It is strange but true to say that the writings of John Milton are echoic of Saiva Siddhantam. In his work 'The Christian Doctrine, Milton the Maha-Muni says: "Our safest way is to form in our minds such a conception of God, as shall correspond with His delineation and representation of Himself in the sacred writings. For granting that both in the literal and figurative descriptions of God, He is, exhibited not really as He is, but in such a manner as may be within the scope of our comprehension: yet we ought to entertain such a conception of Him, as He in condescending to accommodate Himself to our capacities, has shown that He desires we should conceive. For it is on this very account that He has lowered Himself to our level, lest in our flights above the reach of human understanding and beyond the word of scripture, we should be tempted to indulge in vague cogitation and subtleties."

Therefore it is the Pati is hailed as the One endowed with three eyes, a Consort who is concorporate with Him, a throat that is tinct with a tint of blue, etc.

According to Saiva Siddhantam, the Lord has three forms. He is with form, without form and with-and-without form. His form is beyond human comprehension which is why St.Umapati says:: "He is formless

who hath a form as well, and a formless form too, and none of these."¹⁰ The concept of formless form is peculiar to Tamil Saivism. The Sivalinga symbolises His formless form. St.Sekkizhaar says::

"For the unseen formlessness and the seen form
The source and symbol is Siva-lingam"¹¹

The Lord is infinite and immeasurable and so there is no telling about the forms He assumes at will. But whatever His form be, it is for the deliverance of the fettered soul. "The three forms" says the Sivagnaana Siddhyaar, "are for the ridding of the cycle of transmigration from which our souls suffer."¹²

Lord Siva is to be conceived by us in His favourite form of Mother cum Father (Ammal Appar/Ardhanaariswara). This form represents the ineluctable inseparability of the Lord and His Consort. What indeed is Divinity but Authority married to Mercy? This ethereal form of the Lord is his immemorially ancient form (*tonmai-k-kolam*).¹³ The inseparable state of the Lord from His Consort is thus affirmed by St.Umaapati:¹⁴

"Grace -- Sakti's own nature true --, She doth grant
Unto the souls sempiternal; our Lord
From Her is inseparate for ever."

Sakti is one only. Very many are Her manifestations. She is knowledge which is infinite and which is without limitation. She is known as Siva's Grace. It is by and through Grace, Siva is gained.

Thirtysix are the *tattvas*. Five are the *Siva-tattvas*, they being Sivam, Sakti, Sadaasivam, Maheswaram and Suddha-Vidya. Sivam is all knowledge; Sakti is all action; Sadaasivam is knowledge and action in equal proportion; Maheswaram is knowledge dominated by action and Suddha-Vidya is action dominated by knowledge.

Seven are the Vidya-tattvas, they being (1) Kaalam (Time), (2) Niyati (Rule/Destiny), (3) Kalai (Skt.Kalaa: Perceiving power), (4) Araagam (Desiring principle), (5) Vidya (Intelligence), (6) Purusha (the soul endowed with the five tattvas of Kaalam, Niyati, Kala, Araagam and Vidya) and (7) Maya (the material cause of the universe).

Four and twenty are the *Aanma-tattvas*, they being the five elements -- Nilam (Earth), Neer (Water), Tee (Fire), Kaatru (Air/wind) and Aakaayam (Skt.Aakaash) Ether/Space), the subtle elements -- Sabdha (sound), Sparisa (Touch), Rupa (Form), Rasa (Taste) and Gandha (Smell), the five instruments of perception -- Cevi (Ears), Thol (Skin), Kann (Eyes), Taalu (Tongue) and Naasi (Nose), the five instruments of action

-- Vaakku (Mouth that speaks), Paatham (Feet), Paani (Hands), Paayu (Excretory organs), and Upastam (Genital organs), and the fourfold Antakkaranam called Chittam (the perceiving principle), Manam (Skt. Manas : the thinking faculty/the doubting faculty), Ahangkaaram, (the Ego/the individuating principle) and Buddhi (the principle that judges aright).

Souls are infinite. Each one eventually attains liberation. None suffers from perpetual perdition. As souls are numberless, the five acts of Siva are performed sempiternally. The pentad of Siva's acts are creation, sustenance, absorption, concealment and bestowal of Grace. The first four in this series are also acts of Grace.

Paasam comprises three males (impurities) they being Aanava, Kanma (Skt.Karma) and Maya. The concept of Maya requires a word of explanation. This Maya has nothing to do with the indescribable is-and-is not principle posited by Aadi Sankara, and wrongfully understood by some as illusion. Maya in Saiva Siddhanta is a real (*ull porull*). 'Ma' refers to creation and 'Ya' to resolution (absorption). Maya is the stuff out of which Tanu (body), Karana (organs), Bhuvana (worlds) and Bhoga (experience of pleasure as well as pain) are wrought. Maya is the *causa materialis* of the cosmos. At the time of absorption, tanu etc., resolve into Maya which reverts to its causal state. The Lord creates tanu etc., with the aid of His Sakti and the souls endowed with tanu etc., will have to work out their salvation. A soul gets its body in keeping with its Karma. The Lord is the efficient cause (*Nimitta Kaarana*), His Sakti as well as the soul's Karma, the instrumental cause and Maya, the material cause of the universe and embodiment.

Karma constitutes both deeds and results of deeds. The soul will have to eat the consequences of its deeds to get purified. The results of its deeds, are as it were, stored, as in a granary or promptuary, and are called Sanchita. From this a modicum is ladled out for the consumption of the soul in a given life. The soul that undergoes the life ordained thus is said to experience/undergo its *Praarabha*. This is known as "Niyati/oozh" (destiny, kismet, fate). Fate (understood in this light) is indeed invincible. While living a destined life, the soul by reason of its egoism or asserting self-will commits a fresh set of acts and deeds. The results of these--called Aagaamiya --, eventually feed and augment the store of Sanchita which therefore swells apparently for ever. At some stage -- after many many incarnations --, the soul gets vexed, and becomes aware of the futility of its action -- good as well as bad --, and lets go its hold on self-will. In other words, it becomes averse to deeds, good and bad alike. It surrenders

its I-ness and My-ness and iis ready to become a mere instrument in the hands of God. This stage is known as *Iruvinai-oppu* (Skt.Karma-saamyam/the balancing of good and bad deeds). When *Iruvinai-oppu* sets in, the soul is said to have come by *Mala-paripaakam* which marks the apposite hour for its spiritual operation. At this hour God visits the soul in the guise of a Guru. This is known as *Sakti-nipaatan* the descent of Grace). The soul then undergoes a spiritual operation by the Guru who removes from the soul, (or, to be more precise, nullifies the effect of) the *Aanava malam* which has been holding the soul all along under its thralldom. This process is known as *Diksha* (spiritual initiation). By *Diksha*, the Guru purifies the soul and makes it proof against impurity. This is done as it were, by the entrustment of a pass-word, the most coveted of all boons. This is known as the *panchaakshara* (the mystic pentad of syllables). The soul has to chant it as taught by the Guru. This insulates the soul and averruncates its *Aagaamiya*. At the hour of initiation, the whole of the soul's *Sanchita* gets gutted with fire. "Nindranavum teeyil toosaakum"¹⁵ are the words of St.Aandaall -- a celebrated Vaishnavite mystic. Armed with the *Panchaakshara*, the soul is for ever safe. It steeps the soul in a felicity, the goodness of which is infinite.

A word about *Aanava Malam*. This is not to be confused with *Aangkaaram* (Skt.Ahangkaaram) which is haughty pride ego- begotten. *Aanava* is a *malam*, an impurity. This is not the quality of soul. It is soul's blemish. It is a beginningless defect found together with the beginningless soul. This is a darkening and denigrating principle. No soul is free from this. It is called *Irull* (Murk). This can be quelled only by *Arull* (Grace). It is *Avidya* (Nescience). It is the ancestral blindness of the soul, if it may be so described. It abides with the soul like verdigris in copper. This is the root of all evils. It is the adversary of soul. The Hebrew word for adversary is Satan. *Aanava malam* which is Satanic, is one only; but its powers are multitudinous. It is called *Moola* (original) *malam*. It is also called *Sahaja* (innate) *malam*. This *malam* is more dangerous than the Nemean lion, more ferocious than the bristled Arcadian boar, more harmful than the hydra plague of Lerna, fenced round with its invenomed snakes, more violent than the bull of Crete, more strong than the triple-breasted might of threefold Geryon, more injurious than the birds with brazen arrowy feathers that dewlt in the Stymphalian swamps, more fierce than the horses of Thracian Diomed breathing fire from their nostrils along the Bistonian borders and Ismara, more terrific than Cerberus and more merciless than Inferno itself. This evil, is double darkness which hides the soul and hides itself abiding in the soul. It can be routed only by the Grace of Siva. Even then it will not become dead. It will only live dead. It is *Muyalakan* immobilised by the crushing foot of Lord Nataraja.

Three are the stages of souls. In the *Kevala* state/stage the soul is without any body (subtle or physical). It lies in this state ineluctably intertwined by *Aanavamalam*. In this state the soul merely languishes like an eyeless babe in a dark dungeon with none to succour it. It is to save the soul from this plight, the Pati links it with the other two malas of Maya and Kanma. This is likened to the process of removing dirt with fuller's earth. As Maya and Kanma malas get attached to the soul much later they are called *Aagantuka* (adventitious) malas. Endowed with these, in particular with the Maya mala, the soul is a trifle enlightened. This is the second stage called *Sakala*, as the soul is now endowed with a body.

However, when the received enlightenment is abused by the soul by heaping on itself deeds, good and bad, the soul will have to get born again and again embodied in some way or other. This process goes on till the soul arrives at *iruvina-oppu* which in its wake ushers in *Mala-paripaakam* (the ripeness of soul's Aanavamala for removal by the spiritual knife) and this is affirmed by the advent of Sakti-Nipaatam. By Diksha the soul's Sanchita gets gutted. No Aagaamiya will henceforth ensue. The undergoing of Praarabdha for a liberated soul is just a child's play. The soul is now in the third stage called *Suddha* (pure). As the soul is still embodied, the person is called a *Jivan-mukta* (one who is liberated while yet alive). The Jivan-mukta has his being in the Pati. He is just a puppet and the puppeteer is the Pati. Through this puppet, the Pati plays a divine game. The doings of the Jivan-mukta do not bind him. His acts are like fried seeds. They cannot germinate. He is endowed with endless felicity. He companies with the devotees of Siva. To him the insignia of Saivism are Siva Himself. He travels on life's common way in cheerful godliness. When he sheds his mortal coil, he is oned with Siva. It is thus he becomes heir to sempiternal Sivaananda (bliss).

It can thus be seen that "the soul's bondage" according to Ramana Sastri, "has no beginning, but has an end while the soul's spiritual freedom has a definite beginning but no end."¹⁶

The odyssey of a soul meets with its fulfillment who it is anchored for ever in the salvific feet of Lord Siva.

NOTES

1. The Tamil Sivagnaana Bhodam is the authoritative text of Saiva Siddhantam. "The Saiva Siddhanta" says John H.Piet, "means the conclusion of conclusions -- that which speaks the last religious-philosophical word. It is the final authority, the terminus of philosophical thought, the capstone of religious belief. By its very name, it claims that nothing higher exists." -- A Logical Presentation of The Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy by John H.Piet, C.L.S., Madras (1952), Page 2.
2. Ibid., Page 2
3. Ibid., Page 9
4. Ibid., page 5
5. Pandaara Mummani-k-Kovai.
6. A list of important books is given hereunder :
 - (i) The Tattuva-Kattalei translated by H.R.Hoisington, included in Saiva Siddhantam, Vol.I, Dharmapuram Aadhinam, Dharmapuram, Mayiladuthurai (1984). This Kattalai work is a re-print of the work which appeared in 1854.
 - (ii) Siva Gnana Potham translated into English by H.R.Hoisington: Edited by N.Murugesu Mudaliar, Dharmapuram Aadhinam (1979).
A re-print of the work which appeared in 1854.
 - (iii) Sivagnana Bodham translated by J.M.Nallaswami Pillai, re-printed by Dharmapura Aadhinam and Kazhakam in 1945 and 1984.
 - (iv) Sivagnana Siddhiyaar translated by J.M.Nallaswami Pillai, re-printed by Dharmapura Aadhinam in 1948.
 - (v) Saiva Siddhanta As Expounded In The Siva Jnana Siddhyar by V.A.Devasenapathi, Madras University (1960).
 - (vi) Saiva Siddhanta by Violet Paranjoti. Reprinted in 1953/1954, CLS, Madras.
 - (vii) Sivagnana Siddhiyaar translated by K.Sivaraman, Kasi Matam, Tiruppanandal (1949). Re-printed in 1988.
 - (viii) A Logical presentation of the Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy by John H-Piet, CLS, Madras (1952).
 - (ix) Siddhanta Chathushtayam, translated by T.N.Ramachandran, T.R.N.M.L. and Publications 5-D Selvam Nagar, Thanjavur-7.
 - (x) Saiva Siddhantam Vol. I: Edited by T.N. Ramachandran, Dharmapura Aadhinam (1984). Vol.II, Edited by T.N. Ramachandran,

- I.I.S.S.R., Dharmapuram, (1988), Vol.III edited by T.N.Ramachandran (1994) IISSR, Dharmapuram.
- (xi) Pati-Pasu-Paasam by T.N.Ramachandran, I.I.S.S.R., Dharmapuram (1988).
 - (xii) Grace in Saiva Siddhantam And In St-Paul by Joseph Jaswantraj, Madras (1988).
 - (xiii) Saivism in Philosophical Perspective by K. Sivaraman, Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi (1973).
 - (xiv) Love of God According to Saiva Siddhanta by Mariasusai Dhavamony, Oxford at Clarendon Press, London W1, (1971). For greater details readers should consult "An Annotated Bibliography of Saiva Siddhanta Works" compiled by T.N.Ramachandran, I.I.S.S.R., Dharmapuram, 1994.
7. Verse 3, First Tantra, Tirumantiram. Saiva Siddhanta Maha Samajam (1940).
 8. Paradise Lost, Book I, line 40.
 9. Tirutthellenam, Verse I,
 10. Nenju Vidu Thoothu,
 11. Saakkiya Naayanaar Puranam, Verse 8.
 12. Verse 75, Sivagnaana Siddhiyaar, Verse 75.
 13. Verse 18, Tirukkotthumbi.
 14. Verse 2, Tiruvarutpayan.
 15. Verse 5, Tiruppaavai.

3. The Indian Commentatorial Tradition

It is said that almost all the Vedic faiths of India are founded upon the *prasthaana-tryam*, they being the Brahma Sutras, the Principal Upanishads and the Bhagawad Gita. The Upanishads constitute the texts of revelation (Sruti-Prasthaana). They are the very peaks of the Sruti (Vedas). They are perpetuated by oral transmission from Guru to Chela who in turn becomes a Guru and instructs his chela(s). Thus it was, a rigorous and well-disciplined process came into vogue and in time, matured into an unassailable tradition. The Bhagawad Gita ranks next, only to the Upanishads. It is part of the perennial philosophy. It embalms and treasures up the very words of Sri Krishna, on purpose, to a life beyond life. According to Sankara Bhagawad Paada, it is the quintessence of the Vedas (*Samasta-Vedaanta-saarasangraha-bhutam*). It forms part of the Maha Bharata which is a Smriti that is secondary to the Vedas. So it is, the Gita is called the *Smriti-prasthaana*. The Brahma Sutra is hailed as the *Nyaaya-Prasthaana* as it presents the contents of the Vedas in a logical order. It is also known as the Vendanta-Sutra as it is truly the aphoristic text of the Vedanta. It is again known as Saariraka-Sutra as it expounds though laconically, the nature and destiny of the embodied soul. As sannyasins are the ones most competent to cultivate it, it acquired the name 'Bhikshu-Sutra'. Again as it happens to be an investigatory inquiry into the final sections of the Vedas, it is referred to as the Uttara Miamaamsa-Sutra..

The role played by the work, popularly known as the Brahma- Sutras through its exegeses is vital and everlasting. It is on the basis of the interpretation of this opus, every Vedic faith had itself systematised. Aadi Sankara's exegesis ushered into existence the Advaita school, Ramanuja's the Visishtadvaita darshana and Madva's the Dvaita faith. These three Aachaaryas are the more famous among the many exegetes. Biographical notes of a few exgetists are given below:

1. Sankara (788-820) : He is the great disciple of Gaudapaada who propounded what is today called the Maayaavaada. Many consider this name a misnomer. Sankara is celebrated for his lucidity doubled with suasive eloquence. His exposition of Maya, with the passage of time, got

deepened, extended and specialised, in its meaning as well as range. The Dvaitin or the Visihtaadvaitin or the Saiva Siddhantin may vehemently attack Sankara. Yet, it is good to remember in this connection, what Prof. C.D.Sharma once remarked in his classroom. "You can philosophise for or against Sankara, but you cannot philosophise without Sankara".¹ Sankara made very clever use of *Adhyaasa*, "of the double-decker theory of *Saguna* and *Nirguna* Brahman, of *mithyaabheda* and *paaramaarthikaa bheda* etc., in the interpretation of the Sutas and of their philosophy."²

Sankara is a Tamilian by birth and he hailed from the Cera country (Kerala).

2. Padmapaada (C.800) : He was, it is said, the favourite Chela of Sankara. According to Dr. B.N.K. Sharma, Padmapaada's *Panchapaadika* is admittedly the earliest erudite commentary on Sankara's Sutra Bhaashya. Only a portion of the text is extant.

3. Vaacaspati Misra (C.850) : He hails from Mithila and his commentary '*Bhamati*' named after his wife -- a paragon of virtues such as patience, forbearance, self-effacing nature and motherliness at once divinely compassionate and all-sacrificing --, is the greatest commentary on the entire Sankara Bhaashya on Brahma- Sutas. He is an exegete sui generis. He amplified Sankara's exegesis and brought it to a fullness doubled with extraordinary excellence.

4. Prakaashaatman (C.1000) : He produced an elaborate commentary on Padmapaada's work. His work is enriched by his "new orientations to the Advaita doctrines, concepts and categories, their definitions and lay-out."

5. Amalaananda (C.1220-80) : He enjoyed the patronage of sovereigns. He wrote a commentary on the Bhamati, called *Kalpataru*. It serves as a vade-mecum for those that desire to get indoctrinated in the *adhikarana-prasthaana* of Sankara- Bhaashya.

6. *Ramanuja* (1017-1137) : He is known as the Bhaashyakaara though he wrote no commentary on the Upanishads. His *Sri Bhaashya* is based on the sacred writings in Tamil, in particular the Tiruvaaaimozhi of Nammaazhwar -- a Tamil Vaishnavite mystic of unexampled greatness. He also indited two 'abridged commentaries' on the Brahma-Sutas. He resorted to a reinterpretation of some of the Upanishadic passages to lend support to his views. He strained every nerve of his to dethrone Sankara and was partially successful. Dr.B.N.K. Sharma says: "His style

is rather recondite and heavily loaded with compounds and clauses in keeping with the intense emotional impact they were intended to make."⁴

7. Sudarsana Suri (C.1250-1310) : He is the celebrated commentator of the Sri Bhaashya and the Vedarthasanghrah of Ramanuja. He is the senior contemporary of Vedanta Desika -- the polymath --, to whom he is believed to have entrusted the manuscript of his *Strutaprakaasa*. He lived during the troublous time when vandalism by Malik Kafur raged in the south.

8. Madva (C.1238-1317) : He was also known as Aanandatirtha. He is the third great commentator on the Brahma-Sutras. He hailed from Karnataka. His advent was at a time when the systems of philosophy evolved by Sankara and Ramanuja thrive well. Dissatisfied with both the systems, he evolved his own. He wrote, in all, four commentaries on the Brahma-Sutras. He had earlier indited his commentary on the Bhagawad Gita. He also wrote many brief philosophical monographs, Bhaashya on the Ten Upanishads and yet another commentary on the Gita.

Madhva's commentaries are a class of their own. He chose a plain and unadorned style at once terse and trenchant. "His style" says Dr.B.N.K. Sharma, "is thus an index of his purpose and the outcome of the historical and philosophical necessities in which he found himself placed."

9. Trivikrama Pandita (C.1258-1320) : He was a Keralite. He was the Court Pandit of the Rulers of Kumbha in the South Kanara. He was an adherent of Sankara in his early life. Later he became a chela of Madva by whom he was vanquished in a disputation which lasted for a fortnight. He wrote the Tattvapradipa -- a commentary on Madva's Bhaashya.

10. Jayatirtha (C.1335-85) : He is known as Madhva's "Teekaakaara" as he wrote several commentaries on the works of Madhva. He wrote an excellent exegesis called *Tattvapraakaasika* on Madhva's Sutra-Bhaashya. He, it was, who standardised Madhva's thought and his hermeneutics.

11. Vyaasatirtha (1460-1539) : Madhva, Jayatirtha and Vyaasatirtha constitute the 'Munitrayam' (the triad of saintly commentators) of the Dvaita school. He was the spiritual guru of the great emperor Krishnadevaraaya of Vijayanagar. He is the author of an octad of opuses. Das Gupta says: "The logical skill and depth of acute dialectical thinking shown by Vyaasatirtha stand almost unrivalled in the whole of Indian thought."⁵ Dr.B.N.K. Sharma hails him as "the prince of dialecticians of the Dvaita school."⁶ His '*Taatparya Chandrika*' is an illuminating treatise on the interpretations of the Brahmasutras by the Munitrayam.

Of the lesser commentators and the writers of glosses, mention should be made of Vaadirajathirtha (1480-1600), Raghuttamatirtha (1557-96) and Jagannaathathirtha (1718-60).

Among the commentators of Brahma-Sutras, Srikantha stands apart. He was a Saiva par excellence of the Sivaadvaita school. Sivaadvaita is not the same as Saiva Siddhanta; yet passages from Srikantha-Bhaashya squaring with the concepts of Saiva Siddhanta are freely quoted by Saiva scholars. Sivagnaana Yogi held this Bhaashya in great respect and the Yogis's Dravida Maha Bhaashya is replete with quotations from Srikantha-Baashya.

Srikantha calls his system Siva Visishtadvaita. According to Appaya Dikshita (16th C.), Srikantha came after Sankara but before Ramanuja. This view is rejected by Prof. S.S. Suryanarayana Sastri who says: "Srikantha was probably a contemporary of Ramanuja's."⁷ The only extant commentary on Srikantha-Bhaashya is the *Sivaarkamanidipika* by Appaya Dikshita. Srikantha was also known as Nilakantha. The Saiva Siddhantins hail him as a sivachaarya. Kaasivaasi Senthinaatha Ayyar -- the renowned chela of Sri la Sri Arumukha Naavalal of Sri Lanka --, translated into Tamil Srikantha Bhaashya.⁸

Philosophical Bhaashyas apart, there are innumerable Bhaashyas in Sanskrit. Of these two merit mention in this context, though in passing. Saayana -- the brother of Vidyaaaranya who founded the Vijayanagara dynasty --, wrote a bhaashya on the Veda. Saayana flourished during the 14th century. The Vyaakarana of the great Paanini has a commentary hailed as Mahaabhaashya (the great and grand exegesis). This was indited by Patanjali.

Tamil is a hoary language and its works inspired exegetes to indite elaborate commentaries thereon. The Tolkaappiyam is a Tamil Grammar the mastery of which alone entitles one to regard oneself as a fully-fledged Tamil scholar. This grammar is a work of the pre-Christian Era. Ilampooranar, Senaavaraiyar, Kallaadar, Deivachilaiyaar, Peraasiriyar and Nacchinaarkkiniyar are the great commentators of the Tolkaappiyam. This commentatorial tradition is kept alive even today by scholars -- in particular by Pandita Vidwan T.V. Gopala Ayyar and Paavalal Eru S.Balasundaram. The latter's '*Aaraaicchi-k-Kaandikai Urai*' for the Tolkaappiyam appeared in four volumes (1988-89). His is a fresh and original approach -- the outcome of mature thinking.⁹

Five are the magnificent *Kaavyas* in Tamil, they being Silappadikaram, Manimekalai, Jivaka Chintaamani, Kundalakesi and Valaiyaapati. Of these the first three alone are extant in their entirety. Silappadikaaram is

by a prince who became a Jain monk. Adiyaarkkunallaar wrote an excellent commentary on this, and only portions of it are extant. Jivaka Chintaamani is the opus of a Jain sanniyasin, and Nacchinaarkkiiniyar -- a Brahmin and a practioner of the Vedic faith --, wrote an illuminating commentary on this work. Manimekalai is by a Buddhist -- a layman (merchant). This great work lacks a classical commentary.

Tirukurall is an outstanding work in short distichs. Ten are its commentators who throve in the past. Of them Parimelazhakiyaar who also wrote a commentary on the Paripaadal -- a post-Sankam work --, merits special mention. Modern commentators of this work are legion.

Vaishnavism in Tamil Nadu has not only permitted the inditing of commentaries on the canonical works but has actually encouraged it. There are many commentaries on the works of the twelve Aazhwars. There are many commentaries on the Tiruvaaimozhi by Nammaazhwar hailed as the greatest Aazhwar. These are indited in *Manipravala* - made up of a mixture of Tamil and Sanskrit vocables. Each commentary is named after the total number of granthas that constitute the work. They are therefore called Aaraayirappadi (6,000), Onpathunaayirappadi (9,000), Panneeraayirappadi (12,000), Irupathunaalaayirappadi (24,000) and Muppathuaaraayirappadi (36,000). These are the respective works of Tirukkurukaippiraan pillan, Nanjeeyar, Vaadikesari Azhakiyamanavaala Jeeyar, Periyavaacchaan Pillai and Nam Pillai. "*Vainava Urai Valam*" is a work which highlights the greatness of these and other commentators and their works.

The Saivite canonical works are twelve in number, called the Twelve Tirumurai-s. Saivism does not encourage the inditing of commentaries on these sacred texts. Exception however was allowed in favour of one text only known as the Tirukkovaiaar which along with the Tiruvaachakam, forms the Eighth Tirumurai. Both these are by St.Maanickavaachakar. The Tirukkovaiaar is of the 'Akam' genre and hence the exception in its favour. Two commentaries of this work are extant and they are by Peraasiriyar and an anonymous author.

According to tradition, the Saivite is bidden to take the Tirumurais on trust. They are at once authoritative and authentic. They are beyond the pale of analysis which is kill-joy and ratiocination which at its highest is yet parviscient. However investigation into the Sastras is not forbidden. Indeed the researcher is free to exercise his intellect in the realm of the Sastras. He is even called upon to do so. "Drive your intellect as far as it can penetrate" (Sellum alavum celutthunin Cintaiyai)¹⁷ are the words of St.Tirumoolar. Hence the innumerable commentaries on the Meikanta

Sastras. The following list of the Sastras and their commentaries, is fairly representative.

| <i>Sastras</i> | <i>Commentators</i> |
|---|--|
| 1. Tiruviyaloor Uyyavantha - deva's Tiruvuntiyar. | Sivappirakaasar |
| 2. Tirukkadavoor Uyyavanthadeva's Tirukkalitruupadiyar. | Do |
| 3. Meykandadeva's Sivagnaanaabodam. | (a) Paandipperumaall's Virutthi Urai (b) An anonymous author's Teli Porull Vilakkam (c) An anonymous author's Urai known as Sampradaaya or Pazhaiya Urai. (d) Sivagnaana Yogi's (i) Siturai (ii) Perurai (Dravida Maha Bhaashyam) (e) Senthinaatha Ayyar's Sivagnaanaabodha Vachanaalangkaara Deepam |
| 4. Arull Nandi Sivaachaarya's Sivagnaana Siddhiyar | Tattuvaprakaasar's Urai |
| A. Parapakkam | (a) Maraignaana Sambandha Desikar's Urai |
| B. Supakkam | (b) Sivaagra Yogi's Manipravaala Urai (c) Niramba Azhakiya Desikar's Urai. (d) Gnaanappirakaasar's Urai (e) Sivagnaana Yogi's Urai (f) Sri la Sri Subramaniya Desikar's Urai |

- The modern commentators are Muthiah Pillai of Tuticorin, Tiruvilankam Pillai of Sri Lanka, Prof.K.Sundaramoorti and Sri S.S. Mani.
5. Arull Nandi Sivaachaarya's Irupaa Irupathu Namasivaaya Tambiran's Urai
 6. Tiruvatikai Manavaachakam - Kadanthaar's Unmai Vilakkam Two commentaries by anonymous authors.
 7. Umapati Sivaachaarya's (a) Sivappirakasam (a) An anonymous author's Cinthana Urai.
(b) Madurai Sivappirakaasar's Urai
(c) Tiruvilankam Pillai's Putthurai
 8. (b) Tiruvarutpayan (a) An anonymous author's Cinthana Urai
(b) Niramba Azhakiya Desikar's Urai.
(c) An anonymous author's unnamed Urai.
 9. (C) Vinaa Venpaa Namasivaaya Tambiran's Urai
 10. (D) Potrippahrodai An anonymous author's Urai
 11. (E) Kodikkavi Do
 12. (F) Nenju Vidu Thoothu Do
 13. (G) Unmai Neri Vilakkam Cinthanai Urai by an anonymous author and few anonymous exegeses.
 14. (H) Sankalpa Niraakaranam Gnaanappirakaasa Desikar's Urai.

The Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam and the Dharmapuram Aadhinam have produced Sastraic works called "Pandaara Saatthirangall". These have substantially contributed to the growth and propagation of Saiva Siddhantam. Of these, two works, both by the founder of the Dharmapuram Aadhinam, stand enriched by great commentaries. Velli Ambala Tambiran belonging to the Dharmapuram Aadhinam has written a *Pe-*

rurai (great commentary) on St.Gurugnaanasambandhar's *Mutthi Nicchayam*.¹³ He has edited a *Maha Bhaashya* on the Guru's *Gnaanaavarana Vilakkam*.¹⁴ Velli Amba Tambiran is hailed as a polymath and a polyglot.

The Sanskrit commentaries on the Sanskrit *Sivagnaanaabodham* are by Sri Ativarnaasarama Aachaaryavarya Saiva Samayaparipaalaka Sivaagrayogindra Gnaana Sivaachaarya Swamikall.¹⁵ He is popularly known as Sivaagra Yogi. He wrote two commentaries on the *Sivagnaanaabodham*, they being *Sivagnaanaaboda Samgraha Bhaashya* and *Sivagnaanaaboda Vistaara Bhaashya*. Both these works are called *Sivaagrabhaashya*. His *Aadhinam* situate at *Suryanaarkoyil* represents the *Skanda Parampara*. Sivaagra Yogi, a Brahmin by birth, received his *diksha* from *Sivakkozhundu Desikar*, the *Vellaala Pontiff* of the *Suryanaarkoyil Aadhinam*. He transcended with ease, *varna* as well as *ashrama* and so he was hailed as the *Ativarnaasrama Yogi*.

There is a short Sanskrit commentary on the Sanskrit *Sivagnaaboda*, by one *Dakshinamoorti Gnaana Deva*.¹⁶ Sri Kuppaswami Raju of Thanjavur wrote the *Tattuvappirakaasikai* -- a commentary in Tamil on the Sanskrit *Sivagnaanaabodham* --, to establish that the *Sivagnaanaabodham* is truly supportive of the philosophy of Sankara.¹⁷ One Pazhaniswamy Swamikall indited a Tamil commentary on the Tamil *SivagnaanaBodham*, in a similar manner. His exegesis is called the *Vedanta Dipika*.¹⁸ In this connection, the Tamil commentary known as the *Teli Porull vilakka Urai* of *Vadivelu Chettiyar* -- an accredited Vedantin --, deserves mention.¹⁹

India, in particular South India, is the land of *Bhaashyakaaras*. However there are only a few *Maha Bhaashyakaaras*. *Sivagnaana Yogi* is one of those of the precious few.

NOTES

1. Vide page 481 of A Philosophy of Devotion by John C. Plot (1974).
2. The Brahma-Sutras And Their Principal Commentaries -- Vol I, by Dr.B.N.K.Sharma, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (1971), Page 17.
3. Ibid., Page xix.
4. Ibid., Page xxi.
5. History of Indian Philosophy by Surendranath Dasgupta, Vol.IV, (page viii), Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi (1975).
6. Dr.B.N.K. Sharma, Op.Cit., Page xxiii.
7. The Sivaadvaita of Sri Kantha by S.S.Suryanarayana Sastri, University of Madras, (1971), page 24.
8. Sri Nilakantha Sivaachaariyar Aruliccheyth Bhramasootihira Sivaatthuvitha Saiva Paadiyam: Translated by Kaasivaasi Senthinatha Ayyar, (1907), Printed in the Translaator's 'Senthinaathaswami Press', Tirumangalam.

The English translation of Srikantha Bhaashya by A.Mahadeva Sastri was serialised in the monthly called the Siddhanta Dipika (The Light of Truth) between the years 1898 and 1906 (Volumes 1-7).

A free English translation appeared in two volumes in 1959 (Calcutta). It was by Mrs.Roma Chaudhuri. The work was entitled 'Doctrine of Srikantha'.

9. We have in our Foreword (page vii) to Balasundaram's Tennaiol-part III, stated as follows: "I am not drawing the long bow when I say that this work is a masterpiece. Its sutra-form in current idiom enthuses the lover of grammar to pore over it for hours on end, and rise up eventually a wiser man."
10. Vainava Urai Valam, by Dr.Gnaanasundaram, Madras (1989).
11. Vide TIRUKKOVAIYAR, translated by T.N.Ramachandran, Tamil University, Thanjavur (1989).
12. Verse 2109, Tirumantiram, Samaajam (1940).
13. Mutthi Nicchaya-p-Perurai, Dharmapuram Aadhinam, Dharmapuram (1946).
14. Gnaanaavarana Vilakkamum Maapaadiyamum, Dharmapuram Aadhinam (1957-59)

15. The Sivagnaanabodha Sangraha Bhaashya of Sivaagra Yogin, by K.Jayam-mal, Radhkrishnan Institute For Advanced Study in Philosophy, Univer-sity of Madras (1993).
16. Vadamozi Noolkalill Saiva Siddhantam, part II, by Dr.K.Sundaramur-
thy, Sarvodaya Ilakkiya Pannai, Madurai (1977).
17. Sivagnaanabodha Moolamum Tattuvappirakaasikai ennum Tamiizhurai-
yum, by V.Kuppuswami Maharaj, Thanjavur (1916).
18. Sri Sivagnaanabodham (and) Vedanta Dipikaiurai by Pazhanicchaamy
Swamikall, Kumbakonam (1922).
19. Sivagnaana Bhoda Moolamum Teli Porull Vilakka Uraiyum, by K.Vadi-
velu Chettiyar, Madras (1929).

4. *Sivagnaana Yogi*

The exact date of birth of Sivagnaana Yogi is not known to us. That he passed away in 1785 is a fact which is well established. It is asserted that he passed away when he was thirtytwo years old. Obviously it is so contrived that one may be tempted to compare his life-span with that of Aadi Sankara Bhagawad Paada's. This forced comparison is a mere exercise in futility. A short-lived life is not positive indicant of the greatness of that life. Again a long life is not necessarily a benediction. Our Yogi flourished during the spiritual reign of the tenth, the eleventh and the twelfth pontiffs of the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam. He should have, like his co-Tambirans, had his share of joy and misery -- perhaps more misery than joy. The heads of matams are holy men no doubt. Yet they are unpredictably vagarious. Perhaps this stance is adopted to put the disciples to test. We desist from casting comments on their ways. However, hard facts cry for revelation. The head of an Aadhinam passes from paroxysms of rage to paroxysms of tenderness. Our Yogi should have had his periods of angst and agony as well as elation and ecstasy. In any event, the life of a Tambiran is not a bed of roses.

Not much is known about the life of our Yogi. The few episodes relating to him that have somehow gained currency, are not at all authentic. That he was born in Vikramasingkapuram upon- Tambaraparan, that his father was called Aanandakkootthar, that he was christened Mukkalaalingam, that his mother bore the beautiful name Mayilammai, that his ancestors were Saiva Vellaalas who were ardent Siva-bhaktas, that he was a precocious child who in his youth cultivated Tamil and Sanskrit with equal fervour, that he was naturally endowed with an extraordinary capacity for logical analysis and intelligent investigation, that he did not cultivate any subject which he did not, sooner or later, master, that he was a puissant polemicist, that he was attached to the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam, that he was a teacher par excellence whose chelas adored him, that he was a poet sui generis, an able and accurate translator, a scribe of religious tracts and a Mahabhaashyakaara, that he travelled extensively and that he eventually passed away at Tiruvaavaduthurai are facts which cannot be gainsaid. Yet, how long he

lived, no one knows. The various accounts² of his life by scholars are conflicting.

The one scholar who throve between 1815 and 1877, namely Meenaakshisundaram Pillai -- the celebrated guru of Dr.U.Ve. Swaminatha Ayyar --, and who could have furnished us with an authentic biography of our Yogi, has but indited a work which is unfortunately incomplete. Even he opens his work in the Purana - like fashion and says that our Yogi belongs to the seventh generation of a lineage that stood blessed for seven successive generations by St. Agastya (who flourished millennia ago).¹

Attracted by the greatness of our Yogi, K.Subramaniya Pillai wrote a work touching the life and the achievements of our Yogi. He says that when our Yogi was a school-boy, hardly ten summers old--, he met with a few Tambrirans of Tiruvaavaduthurai, in his village, that, prompted by his innate devotion for Siva and His servitors, our Yogi invited them to his house, that the Tambrirans willingly complied with his request, that he requested his mother to provide them with toothsome food, that the Tambrirans were treated to a scrumptious feast, that as he was overwhelmed by the hospitality which his mother extended to the saintly visitors, he burst into a verse extolling the virtues of his mother,³ that as desired by him, he was later entrusted to the custody of the visitors who were then sojourning in Paapanaasam, that they took him to Tiruvaavaduthurai and that he thus became the recipient of the grace of the then Pontiff of Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam namely Sri la Sri Velappa Desikar. It is also said that he received his diksha from the junior pontiff called Pin Velappa Desikar.

It is to be said to the credit of Dr.Samy Ayya that he is the only scholar who has written an acceptable account of our Yogi. His short biography of our Yogi which forms part of his thesis, is entitled to our credence.⁴ Again some important facts can be gathered from the work called Guruparamparai Vilakkam.⁵ The facts stated in this work run counter to some of the dicta of Subramaniya Pillai.

A few facts pertaining to the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam are hereunder narrated for presenting the reader with a proper backdrop. Four are the Santaana Aachaaras of Saiva Siddhantam, they being Meykandaar, Arull Nandi Sivaachaarya, Maraignaanasambandha Desikar and Umaapati Sivaachaarya. After the fourth Aachaarya, the parampara branched into two directions, one founding the Dharmapura Aadhinam and the other the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam. Arull Namasivaayar of Sikaazhi is to be reckoned as the successor of Umaapati. Severing all phenomenal ties he chose to live in a loft and so was known as Macchucchettiyaar.

Siddar Sivappirakaasar was his disciple. Sri Vaidhyanaathar of Moovaloor was initiated into the Aagamic way of Saivism by Sivappirakaasar who gave him his Guru's name, namely Namasivaayar. He founded the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam. He was its first pontiff. He was succeeded by Sri Ambalavana Desikar who in turn was succeeded by Uruthirakoti Desikar. After him came Sri Velappa Desikar, Sri Kumaarasaami Desikar, Sri Kumaarasaami Desikar the second, Sri Maasilamani Desikar and Sri Raamalintha Desikar. The tenth pontiff was Sri Velappa Desikar. Our Yogi was a junior contemporary of this pontiff, also known as Mun Velappa Desikar. He appointed a Tambiran called Velappa Desikar as his junior. According to the practice which then obtained in the Aadhinam, the see of the pontiff was Tiruvaavaduthurai. During his reign his junior would abide at Suchindram to propagate Saiva Siddhantam.

The Guru Parampara Vilakkam⁶ makes it plain that our Yogi initially abode at Suchindram and that his guru was the junior pontiff who presided over the matam in that place. It was here our Yogi pursued his study. It was from the junior pontiff our Yogi received his initiation. Mukkalaalingar was thereafter known as Sivagnaanaswami.⁷ These are the plain facts. At any rate, the inference that our Yogi received his initiation at Suchindram -- a town close to his native village --, and not at Tiruvaavaduthurai which is at least 600 kilometers away from his village, savours of greater possibility. Dr. Samy Ayya makes capital out of an episode which is recorded in a verse of our Yogi's. When the *tavasupillai* (cook), by way of courtesy, desired to know of the menu that would be pleasing to the Yogi, the latter couched his menu in a verse. Its paraphrasal translation runs thus :

"Make some *tuvaiyal* and a dish of *Pacchadi*;
I'll appreciate fried chips of any kind; greens--
Cooked and ground and treated with asafoetida
Is not unwelcome; forget not to add well - ground,
Fresh and sweet-smelling pepper to the curry."⁸

The reference to 'fresh and sweet-smelling pepper' is important. It is in areas in and around Kerala, green and fresh pepper is available. In the chola realm dried pepper alone is used. So, it is illative, according to Dr. Samy Ayya, that the verse in question was composed in Suchindram and not Tiruvaavaduthurai.

Our Yogi abode at Suchindram for many years. When the junior pontiff desired to have a darshan of his guru at Tiruvaavaduthurai, he left Suchindram with our Yogi. On his way he sojourned at Rajavallipuram,

also known as Sepparai. Here our Yogi sang a decad in magnification of the Goddess Akilaandeswari in the august presence of Velappa Desikar. On his way, Desikar worshipped at many shrines in the company of our Yogi and others. He eventually arrived at Peroor where he was destined to 'breathe his last'.⁹ After completing the funeral rites, our Yogi and others arrived at Tiruvaavaduthurai to inform the pontiff of the passing away of his junior.

In the history of our Yogi, we meet with a triad of Velappa Desikars. This has led to some tohu-bohu. The three have to be properly identified. The tenth pontiff of the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam is the first of the three. He nominated a successor who also bore the same name. This junior abode at Suchindram. As ill-luck would have it, he passed away at Peroor as narrated by us earlier. So the pontiff had once again to appoint his successor. This successor also bore the same name. He was therefore known as Pin Velappa Desikar (Velappa Desikar the second). This Desikar eventually became the eleventh pontiff of the Aadhinam. To avoid confusion, we can associate with their names their respective places of *paripoornam*.¹⁰ The tenth pontiff can be referred to as Sankaranaaraayanarkoyil Velappa Desikar, the junior who abode at Suchindram as Peroor Velappa Desikar and the eleventh pontiff as the Tirupperunthurai Velappa Desikar. Our Yogi was a contemporary of all these three holy men. He was the direct disciple of Peroor Velappa Desikar -- the Pontiff - Designate who was prevented from ascending the spiritual throne by reason of his untimely demise. That it was Peroor Velappa Desikar who was the direct guru is also corroborated by extraneous evidence. The 11th pontiff is the author of the Tiruppariyalloor Puranam. The author of the Panchaakshara Pahrodai is Peroor Velappa Desikar. In this latter opus are explicated the way of chanting the mystic pentad (Panchaakshara) and the way of remaining poised in it. In a verse of our Yogi's Kaanchi-p-Puranam, our Yogi hails his guru Velappa Desikar thus: "Whatever be one's spiritual concept, it is (already) contained in the mystic pentad. So did he explicate it, besides revealing its true nature and stature. He also lucidly taught the way of chanting it and getting poised in it in all the five *avastas* (states). Again he declared to me truly the inner content of the mystic pentad and plunged me, (as it were), in the bliss of Siva. He was pleased with me -- a mere cur --, and my service to him. I lay my head at the feet of (such) Velappa Desikar."¹¹ Our Yogi has distilled into the above passage, the very quintessence of the Panchaakshara Pahrodai indited by Peroor Velappa Desikar.

Our Yogi abode at Tiruvaavaduthurai for some years. We do not know how long he stayed there. He spent his time usefully in this holy

place. He helped Sankaranamasivaayar in writing a commentary on the Tamil Grammar called Nannool. He also indited an opus called Ilakkana Vilakkacchooraavali in refutation of Tiruvaaroor Vaidhyanaatha Naavalar's Ilakkana Vilakkam. A work called Siddhanta Marabu was written by a servitor of the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam. Someone wrote a work condemning this work. To condemn this condemnation our Yogi indited an opus called Siddhanta Marabu Kandana Kandanam. As our Yogi was dissatisfied with the earlier commentaries on Sivagnaanabodham, he wrote an exegesis which came to be known as the 'Siturai' (the lesser commentary). He also wrote a commentary for the Supakkam of Sivagnanaa Siddhiyaar.¹²

No prophet is honoured in his home-town. A genius is seldom respected in his own region. The kismet of our Yogi appears to be no exception to this rule. Life in a matam is made hard by peculiar circumstances. We feel sad to observe that the eradication of 'mutt-bandicoots' is impossible of achievement, and mischievous elements stick to holy places like barnacles and lampreys adhering to rocks and ship-bottoms. A stray verse of our Yogi's truly sizes up the sorry state of affairs that prevailed in the cuisine of the Aadhinam.¹³ With the leave of the eleventh pontiff (Pin Velappa Desikar), our Yogi left for Kaanchipuram.

It was at Pillaiyaarpaalayam¹⁴ in Kaanchi that our Yogi abode for many years. It was during this period he wrote a critique on the *phala-sruti* verse of the Kamba Ramayana, beginning with the words: "Naadiya Porull..."¹⁵ This critique but bespeaks our Yogi's occasional propensity to indulge in hermeneutical jugglery. That he was all the while aware of the greatness of Kambar when he wrote the critique, is obvious. It was in Kaanchi he wrote a work called "Edutthu ennum sollukku itta Vairak-kuppaayam"¹⁶ to refute the Sivasamavaada Commentary on Sivagnanaa Siddhiyaar by Sri Gnaanappirakaasar of Sri Lanka. To reinforce the ideas set forth in this work, he wrote another work called Siva Samavaada Urai Maruppu. According to Arunai Vadivel Mudaliyaar, it was at Kaanchi that our Yogi translated into Tamil Sarvaathma Sambu's Siddhanta Prakaasika, Hara Dhatta Sivaachaarya's Sloka Panchakam and Appayya Dikshita's Siva Tattva Vivekam, besides inditing the grammatical opus called Tolkaappiyacchoothira Vrutthi.¹⁷ Obviously our Yogi was much respected by the citizens of Kaanchi. Is not Kaanchi the citadel of scholarship?¹⁸

Our Yogi also visited holy shrines in and around Kaanchi. When he was sojourning at Tiruvotriyoor, one Chinniah Mudaliyaar -- a patron of Literature --, invited him to his town Manali. At Manali our Yogi studied

in depth the Vedas and the Aagamas. He also, at the request of his chelas, visited and sojourned at places like Kulatthoor, Tottikkalai, Maangkaadu and Tirumullaivaayil. It was during such sojourn, he indited the Kulatthoor Amuthaambikai Pillaitthamizh, the Kulatthoor Pathitruppatthan-taadi and the Tirumullai Vaayil Antaadi. He returned to Kaanchi with a set purpose. He was by now a consummate scholar. He was endowed with a polyvaliancy. *Abeunt studia in mores* (Studies pass into character). Unto none did this maxim apply better than to our Yogi. His life of tapas was ready to confer on him its fruit. The Yogi indited the Dravida Maa-Padiyam, the Mahabhashya on Meykandaar's Sivagnaanabodham -- a work which the Saivite world will not willingly let die. This work is the magnum opus of our Yogi's. It is a magnificent work worth its weight in ninefold gems. More about this work in the next chapter.

Our Yogi left Kaanchipuram for Tiruvaavaduthurai with a sense of fulfillment. The ruling Pontiff was pleased beyond measure with the achievement of our Yogi. During this time, the Yogi indited the works: Kambar Andaadi and Tiruvekambar Aanandakkalippu. He then began to flex his transcreative muscle with his rendering of Kaanchi Puranam into Tamil. The Arangketram of this Puranam took place in Kaanchi. More about this in a separate chapter.

Dr.U.Ve. Swaminatha Aiyar in his work : Sri Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai Avarkalin Charitthiram¹⁹ furnishes us with a few facts about our Yogi. When Meenaakshisundaram Pillai was sojourning at Bangalore, he heard that the cook of our Yogi was still living there. He called on him and learnt from him a few facts. We, hereinbelow, give the details. "Sivagnaana Munivar abode in the matam belonging to the Tiruvaavaduthurai (Aadhinam), at Kaanchipuram. In that matam was a shrine for Meykanda Deva. The Sengkuntar citizens of that town attended to the needs of our Yogi. Each family rendered him this service in its turn. He indited the Kaanchi Puranam and the Sivagnaana Bodha Bhaashya while he abode there. He initiated (many of) his patrons into the way of (Aagamic) Saivism, blessed them with Panchaakshara Upadesa and empowered them to perform Siva-Pooja. When he sojourned at Madras, his stay was sought to be taken care by some eminent gentlemen. He told them that for certain reasons he was observing a Vrata (vow) for a mandala (45 days) and lived on milk and fruits only."²⁰ Dr. Aiyar says that the cook from whom these facts were gathered, was then ninety years old.

To spend his last days our Yogi returned to Tiruvaavaduthurai. He had lived a full life. He had initiated into Aagamic Saivism men who

would foster it with utmost care. His disciples were legion. Twelve are considered to be the more important among them, they being : 1) Kacchiyappa Munivar, 2) Subramaniya Munivar of Tottikkalai, 3) Ilakkanam Chidambaranaatha Munivar, 4) Kaanchi Saravanappatthar, 5) Ramanaathapuram Somasundaram Pillai, 6) Kaanchi Chidambara Munivar, 7) Kaanchi Mutthukkumaara Desikar, 8) Tirumukkoodal Chandrasekara Mudaliyaar, 9) Karavaanthandal Adaikkalam Kaattha Mudaliyaar, 10) Kadamparkoyil Kaliyaanasundara Upaathiyaayar 11) Tirucchitrumbala Desikar and 12) Pillayaarpaalayam Muniyappa Mudaliyaar. Among these, Kacchiyappa Munivar -- the author of the second part of the Kaanchi Puranam, the Tiruvaanaikkaa Puranam, the Poovaaloor Puranam, the Peroor Puranam, the Tirutthanikai Puranam, the Vinaayakar Puranam and other Prabhandas --, ranks first.

Our Yogi was pleased to return to Tiruvaavaduthurai for a significant reason. His own chela was then the pontiff of the Aadhinam. He was called Tiruvambala Desikar. A significant anecdote rife among scholars is very illuminating. When, pat on his arrival at Tiruvaavaduthurai, our Yogi called on Tiruvambala Desikar -- the ruling pontiff -- to pay his obeisance, the pontiff was pleased to observe that he was blessed with Sivagnaanam (Gnosis/Siva's own knowledge). To this, in utter humility the Yogi is said to have replied as follows: "Sivagnaanam belongs to Tiruvambalam." Tiruvambalam is the forum where Siva dances for ever.

Our Yogi attained *paripoornam* on Sunday the eighth of Chittirai, 1785. His samaadi (place of burial) is a place of worship for Saiva Siddhantins. An old painting of our Yogi adorns the wall of the Aadhinam. The words referring to this picture are as follows: ".....Sivamayam, This is the sacred picture of Sivagnaana Yogikall -- the Draavida Maha Bhaashyakaara --, who emerging as the tutelary deity (*Kula Deivam*) of the Aadhinam has eternalised the immense wealth of the spiritual learning through the Sivagnaana Bhaashya that illumines the divine grace of Sri Panchaakshara Desikar of the Tirukkayilaaya Parampara."²¹ No scholar, in any quarter of the globe, has ever earned an accolade matching our Yogi's. Sri la Sri Subramaniya Desikar -- the 16th pontiff of the Aadhinam, the munificent patron of Tamil scholars --, was always pleased to refer to the Yogi as the Aadhina-Kula- Deivam.²² In all humility we affirm that our Yogi is not only the tutelary deity of the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam but the family deity of every true Saiva Siddhantin.

NOTES

1. Sri Sivagnaana Yogikall Charitthiram by Maha Vidwan Menakshisundaram Pillai, Second Part-Verses 25 and 26: Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam (1963).
2. The verse in translation is as follows :
 "My mother, an *Aruntati*, is an opulent woman
 Who for ever feeds servitors (of Siva) fittingly;
 She -- a pea-fowl poised in virtue --, so serves
Aanandakkootthar that his heart revels in joy."

The original of the above verse is attributed by some to one of the servitors fed by her.

3. Sivagnaana Munivar Varalaarum Noolaaraaicchiyum by K.Subramania Pillai, (Page 6), Hilaal Press, Tirunelveli, 1932.
4. Sivagnaana Munivarin Kaanchi-p-Puranam: Ore Aaivu by Dr.Samy Ayya, Annamalai University, 1989.
5. Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhina Guru Paramparai Vilakkam by Subramania Tambiraan, (page 118), Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam, 1981.
6. Ibid., Page 119.
7. Draavida Maapaadiyakaarar Sri Maatava Sivagnaana Munivar Arul Nool Katturaikall (page 30), Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam, 1986.
8. Tuvaiyal is spiced vegetable paste. Pacchadi is grated vegetables salted and soaked in curds.
9. The death of a holy man is referred to as paripoornam.
10. See note 9.
11. Kaanchi Puranam, Paayiram - Verse 12.
12. Guru paramparai Vilakkam : Op.Cit. page 126.
13. The verse in, the translation, is as follows :
 "A man of Kongku cooked the broken rice
 The servitors began to eat; their eyes roved
 Hither and thither, without casting looks on the victuals.
 O God, behold our sin, our plight and our wretchedness."
14. Kaanchi-p-Puranam : Ore Aaivu, Op.cit., Page 22.
15. Sivagnaana Swaamikall Aruliccheytha Kaanchi-p-Puraanam, Kaanchipuram (1937), page 31.
16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.
18. Vide "Kaanchi of the early seventh century" in Saint Sekkizhaar by T.N.Ramachandran, MIL series, Sahitya Academi, New Delhi (1994).
19. Tirisirapuram Maha Vidwan Sri Meenaakshisundaram Pillai Avarkalin Charitthiram by Dr.U.Ve.Swaminatha IYER Part-1, Tamil University, Thanjavur (1986) Pages 112-13.
20. Ibid., Page 113.
21. Sivagnaana Munivar Arull Nool Katturaikall - Op.Cit., Page 59.
22. Sri Meenaakshisundaram Pillai Avarkalin Charitthiram, Part II (page 250), Tamil University 1986.

5. *The Draavida Maa-Paadiyam*

Great truths are eternally valid. They are usually couched in cryptic formulas (sutras). Though these are indited during a specific period, apparently to instruct *Sadhakas* who flourish at such a time, they continue to be valid during the succeeding centuries too. However, the world may undergo much change as time passes on. A sea-change in approach, outlook and values may be ushered in by efflux of time. Yet even during changed time and circumstances the validity of the embalmed truths thrives. Truth can never become obsolete, its languages may appear to be archaic though. It is to demonstrate patently, its latent freshness, commentaries come into existence. Incidentally these exegeses sweep away the cobwebs that begin to shroud truth. The office of the commentator is to averruncate misinterpretation. It is to make truth to stand firm, proof against the tooth of Time and razure of oblivion, the wise ones in the past laid the foundation-stone for the building of an energising tradition. This tradition, so long as it remains unbroken, will carry the message intact and undamaged. The guru teaches the message to his disciple, who in turn becomes a guru and instructs his disciple, and thus the torch is carried on ad infinitum, without getting dimmed or extinguished. This *Parmpara* is in charge of the right type of dissemination of knowledge to deserving aspirants. Occasions may arise when a restatement of truth in a new light may become an imperative necessity. Maha Kavi Bharathi said : "Vedam pudumai cei."¹ New interpretations for old truths are means that guarantee their validity.

In this context, it must be observed that wisdom is not cleverness. Wisdom is concerned with truth and the way of life in conformity with truth. Cleverness aims at gaining superiority. Cleverness may not be against truth, but it does subordinate truth to suit its purposes. Wisdom is neither a "wielder of" an axe nor a grinder. Cleverness has an axe to grind. When the realm of scriptures is invaded by cleverness, truth suffers. The outcome is tohu-bohu. Lysis - - a character created by Prof. V.V. John --, says : "I too had heard that the Indians love an argument, that the first verbal hair was split in India, and that their pundits could find twenty-four interpretations for a single line of scripture."² "Six hundred and thirty

bishops and deputies met in Chalcedon, a city opposite Constantinople on the Bosphorus, at the request of Emperor Marcianus," says Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, "in order to settle the controversies raised on the subject of the person of Christ" by the Eutychian and Nestorian controversialists. For three weeks nothing but vulgar outcries (ekboeseis demotikai) was the outcome.³

No faith, worth its name, can afford to encourage cleverness at the cost of truth. To preserve and foster the purity and truth of Saiva Siddhantam, Aadhinams came into existence in Tamil Nadu. The head of an Aadhinam is known as the *Pandara Sannidi* (the great presence of spiritual opulence), and his disciples are known as Tambirans. These were steeped in the knowledge of the esoteric truths. It is well known that spiritual experience is gained by due culture of the soul. The holy men in the Aadhinams observed the spiritual time-table and underwent the procedure prescribed, namely *Charya*, *Kriya* and *Yoga* to become fit vessels for reception of *Gnaanam*. It is only those that have completed the triad of *Charya*, *Kriya* and *Yoga* that become *Atikaari-s* (persons endowed with competency) that are eligible to cultivate the Siva Gnaana Bhodam, the content of which is Gnosis (Godly Wisdom).

Sivagnaana Yogi : The very name is revelatory. He is one who has completed the spiritual discipline of *Charya*, *Kriya* and *Yogam*. These lead one to Sivagnaanam. Sivagnaana Yogi is therefore one who is a guru, sui generis. Our Yogi has blessed the world of Tamil Saivism with two commentaries for the Sivagnananabhodam, one called the *Sitrurai* (a concise exegesis) and the other called *Maa-Paadiyam* (the great Bhaashya). Our Yogi is therefore acclaimed as the official interpreter of Saiva Siddhantam. Unlike some of the earlier commentators, he was blessed with perfect understanding. The other commentators -- of course, not all of them --, were like the unnamed commentator criticized by Ramakanta. "In his own commentary," says Richard H. Davis, "on the *Matangapaaramesvaraagama* Ramakanta contrasts himself with this other unnamed commentator of the same text who ended his explication after the *gnaanapaada*."⁴ Each system has its *paribhaasha* -- a language peculiar to it. The learner must master this language. This language is packed with especial significance. It conveys nothing to the indifferent reader. It is language which contributes to the opulence of commentaries. These exegeses are not for the common man whose prime concern is with the material world in which he lives confronted by a multitude of problems. He is at best a *bubhukshu* (one who seeks worldly enjoyment) and not at all a *mumukshu* (one who seeks after salvation). A *bubhukshu* and a *mumukshu*, according to R.H. Davis, do things in reverse order.

Mumukshus are the spiritual aristocrats in the Republic of Religion. They are hailed as Maharajahs. The envoi verses of St. Sambandhar and St. Sundarar bear eloquent testimony to this, their greatness.⁵

According to the pundits of the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam, our Yogi indited the Sitururai first and then the Maha Bhaashya. Yet, I have heard the late-lamented Prof. K. Vellaivaaranam express the view that it is the Sitururai which is the later work. This view of the great Professor -- a sound scholar and an impartial critic --, merits due consideration. In any event, I am of the opinion that the *Sitururai* -- a Vade-mecum of Saiva Siddhantam --, has caused the Maa-Paadiyam to become a work of reference to be consulted when the need arises. It will not be amiss to liken the Maa-Paadiyam with Mahamuni Milton's Paradise Lost. Both are works of universal knowledge, though in differing ways. Borrowing Dr. Johnson's words, and employing them *mutatis mutandis*, one may say as follows : 'Maa-Paadiyam is one of those books which the reader admires and lays down, and forgets to take up again. None ever wished it longer than it is. Its perusal is a duty rather than a pleasure. We read our Yogi for instruction, retire harassed and overburdened, and look elsewhere for recreation; we desert our master and seek for companions.' Less learned persons are bound to feel uneasy in the Yogi's august presence. He is a Brobdingnagian ; all others are but Lilliputians.

One can count on one's fingers the number of scholars who have cultivated the Maa-Paadiyam. There are Saivites who have not even heard of the name of this magnum opus. These are nominal Saivites. Again, even among the practitioners of Saivism, a very few only desire to pore over this work. It is to help scholars understand this work in its true light, commentaries on the Maa-Paadiyam have appeared in recent times.⁶ The Dharmapuram Aadhinam is running in many centres Evening Colleges to propagate Saiva Siddhantam. A special course is conducted for the explication of the Maa-Paadiyam. The Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam whose '*Kula Deivam*' is our Yogi, is doing commendable service to highlight the Siddhanta Sastras.

A work by the late-lamented scholar Vajravel Mudaliyaar, called Siva Gnaana Paadiya-th-Thiravu, is an excellent guide for the Maa-Paadiyam.⁷ The great scholar--an acknowledged cognoscente of Saiva Siddhantam --, has also translated the Bhaashyam into English. This translation is of immense help to the competent scholars. Even a competent scholar will have to strain every nerve of his in his endeavour to learn this opus. He will have to pursue his study with patience and perseverance. It is but a truism to say that great works are not to be cultivated with ease. It is one

in a million who becomes knowledgeable in no time. That one, according to Kaivalya Navanitam is truly a blessed soul. The adage says : "Things have tears." The mastery of the Maa- Paadiyam can be achieved by that aspirant who is not daunted by countretemps and quandaries and whose tireless effort is doubled with devotion. Equipped with patience and perseverance, the seeker can, sooner or later, gain understanding and feel eventually richly rewarded.

The inditing of a Bhaashya is no easy joke. The Bhaashyakara must be a myriad-minded polymath. He should be a master of the national language (Sanskrit), his mother tongue and other regional tongues too. He must have studied in depth the Vedas, their *Angas*, the *Smritis*, the *Itihasas*, the *Aagamas*, the *Stotras*, the *Sastras* etc. He must have had his indoctrination through competent preceptors. He should be endowed with a valiancy to wield the language with precision and accuracy. He must be a good logician too.

Our Yogi wrote his Bhaashya on the Tamil Sivagnaana Bhodam which he believed to be a translation of the Sanskrit original. The Tamil work in the main, comprises twelve sutras made up of forty lines. As John H. Piet observes : "The Tamil Siva Gnaana Bhoda is, without doubt, one of the most closely - reasoned religious philosophies found anywhere in the world."⁹ Our Yogi took the thirtynine divisions of the SivaGnaana Bhodam and placed them in the form of syllogisms, giving the entire work a seriated logical sequence. On these is structured his Bhaashya. Before commencing his explication, he took to the refuting of the outermost religions such as the Lokaayatam, the fourfold Bhuddism (*Madhyamika*, *Yogacara*, *Sauntraantika* and *Vaibhaashika*) and Jainism, the outer religions such as the *Taarkika*, *Mimaamsa*, *Ekaanmavaada*, *Bhaskara's Parinaama Vaada*, *Krita Brahma Vaada*, *Sabda Brahma Vaada*, *Sankya*, *Yoga* and *Paancharaatra*, and the inner-outer schools such as the *Paasupata*, the *Mahavrata*, the *Kaapaalika*, the *Vaama* and the *Bhairava* and also the *Aikkiya Vaada* School.

In this context is to be reiterated that Saiva Siddhanta is critical of all varieties and shades of Monism (*Ekaatma Vaada*) including the Monism of the Word (*Sabda Brahma Vaada*). Sarvaatma Sambhu considers the Brahmasutra itself 'extrinsic' to Saivism because of its overtones of *Ekaatma Vaada* (Siddhanta Prakaasika, Sastra Prakaranam).¹⁰

Our Yogi had to employ the acknowledged classical style of the bhaashyakaaras. This involves the devoting of a whole section to a theme and arranging the sections systematically. The sections called adhikaranas are factorised in the following order : (1) Theme (Vishaya/Pratigna), (2)

Questioning of the Theme (Samsaya), (3) Prima-Facie view (Purva-Paksha), (4) Answers to the objection of Purva-Paksha (Siddhanta) and (5) Interconnection of the sections (Sangati). (Some scriptural texts are intended as the subject-matter for the theme. These are known as Vishaya-Vaakya.)

Our Yogi has packed his commentary with unassailable facts and findings that are drawn from irreproachable sources. The text of the Maa-Paadiyam published in 1936, covers 517 pages (demy size).¹¹ A rough reckoning shows that our Yogi has derived support for his views from as many as ninety seven works. These are in Sanskrit as well as Tamil. His citations are from works so various as Akanaanooru, Atharva Sika, Athikaranaartha Sangraham, Skanda Purana, Sivadharmothra as also Jivaka Chinthaamani and Naaladiyaar.

Our Yogi's knowledge is encyclopedic. He is a master of logic. His attacks range from rapier - thrust to trenchant blunderbussing. Ever alert and conscious of his superior powers, he can barge into the thick of battle and emerge unscathed and triumphant. He knows how to steal his foe-man's thunder and wield it very effectively against the hapless enemy. Sudarsana Aachaarya -- a former Vaishnavite --, embraced Saivism, after vanquishing the Vaishnavites in a disputation. He indited a pentad of verses in Sanskrit called Sloka-Panchakam. This work cataglogues twenty two points which irrefutably establish the unique superiority of Lord Siva. Our Yogi translated this work into Tamil and made capital out of this. This is quoted in extenso, in the most appropriate place in the Maa-Paadiyam. The points serialised by the Yogi are as follows :¹²

- (1) Siva is the very import of the most sacred of *Mantras*, namely the *Gayatri*;
- (2) Siva's icon was installed by Sri Rama and adored by him;
- (3) Siva graced Krishna who adored Him at Kailaas, with a boon whereby Krishna came by a son;
- (4) Siva bestowed on Vishnu the divine Disc as a guerdon for doing pooja to Siva with fresh floral offerings made up of 999 flowers and one of his own eyes;
- (5) Siva gutted with fire the three, winged citadels of the Asuras;
- (6) Siva gutted with fire the God of Love (a son of Vishnu);
- (7) Siva kicked Death to death;
- (8) Siva quaffed the deadliest venom (*Halaahala*) in no time, and saved the universe;

- (9) He smote the unholy sacrifice of Daksha (in which Vishnu and other gods participated);
- (10) Siva gave Arjuna the invincible *Paasupataastra*;
- (11) Siva quelled the puissance of Narasimha -- an avatar of Vishnu;
- (12) When Vishnu became a woman Siva begot through him Saastha;
- (13) All the wise ones of *orbis terrarum* adore Siva only, in boundless devotion;
- (14) Siva it is who confers on His devotees the eightfold opulence;
- (15) Siva is hailed by Vishnu in all his ten incarnations;
- (16) When Siva stood a column of fire, Vishnu and Brahma essayed in vain to eye His base or top;
- (17) Siva (unlike other gods) is not subject to the process of birth and death;
- (18) Siva caused the outstretched arm of Vyasa to stay still, when the latter essayed to solemnly affirm the supremacy of Vishnu;
- (19) Vishnu served as Siva's Mount (Nandi) at the time of Tripurasamhaara;
- (20) At the Grand Dissolution of the Cosmos, Siva wears a garland of skulls in which are included those of Vishnu and Brahma's ;
- (21) Siva is the Grantor of Gnosis and Deliverance to His servitors, and
- (22) Siva indeed is the Pasupati -- the Lord of all souls.

Our Yogi's devotion to Saiva Siddhanta is writ large in his Bhaashya which, inter alia, reflects his unexampled zeal for the proper propagation of Saivism. Our Yogi is a born champion of Tamil Saivism and his commentary is a living muniment of his faith. The Tamil sage Tiru. Vi. Kaliyaanasundara Mudaliyaar says : "A scrutiny of the analytical subtlety displayed by the Yogi in his philosophical enquiry persuades the wise ones to come to the conclusion that the Yogi is Srikanta, Sankara, Ramanuja and Mahdva -- all rolled into one. An examination of his Tamil works, likewise, shows that in our Yogi are beheld the great commentators -- Nakkirar, Ilampooranar, Parimel Azhakar and Nacchinaarkkiniyar."¹³

He that cultivates the Yogi's Bhaashya, we are sure, is bound to be rewarded with an understanding of the hoary Vedas, the Vedanta, the Brahma Sutra and the Saiva Agamas, without ever having read these in their original language.

NOTES

1. Pudiya Aatthichoodi by Subramaniya Bharati, Bharati Paataalkall, Tamil University - 1987.
2. Plato's Indian Republic by V.V. John, Rupa and Co., - 1993, page 1.
3. Unwritten Tradition - page 71 -, in The Culture of the Soul among Western Nations by P. Ramanathan, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London - 1907.
4. Ritual in an Oscillating Universe, by Richard H. Davis, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1991 - Page X.

Ramakantha's Dicta are as follows :

"A certain commentator who knew only philosophy completed an extensive examination of the knowledge section (jnana-pada), and altogether degraded the three practical sections concerning ritual action, yoga and proper conduct. Whereas I, honouring the Lord Siva, will here compose a lucid exposition of those sections as well, because the types of action prescribed here conform (*anuga*) completely with the meaning of the philosophical discourse."

5. An ignorance of the religio-cultural backdrop may land a superficial reader in a realm to confusion. Periyazhwar is also known as Puduval-k-Kone. This name bespeaks his saintly glory. To say that he "had an additional status akin to that of chieftain, perhaps mayor" is sheer balderdash. Vide Antal and Her Path of Love by Vidya Dehejia, State University of New York Press, Albany (1990) - page 9.
6. Sivagnaana Bhoda Maa-Paadiya-p-Porull Nilai Vilakkam by Mahavidwan C. Arunai Vadivelu Mudaliyaar, Tamil University, Thanjavur - 1991.

Maathavacchivagnaana Munivar Aruliya Siva Gnaana Maa - Paadiyam (Vilakkathudan) by Ci. Cu. Mani, Arull Nandi Sivam Arull Pani Mandram, 78, Selvi Nakar, Sindupoonthurai, Tirunelveli - 627 001.

The Kaasi Matam at Tiruppanandal has commissioned Prof. K. Sundaramoorthy to indite an Explication of the Maa-paadiyam. The work is in progress.

7. Sivagnaana Paadiya-th-Th iravu by K. Vajravel Mudaliyaar, Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced study in Philosophy, University of Madras, 1977.
8. Sivajnana Maapaadiyam by K. Vajravel Mudaliyaar, Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai, 1985.

9. A Logical Presentation of the Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy by John H. Piet, The Christian Literature Society for India, Madras - (1952), page 11.
10. Saivism in Philosophical Perspective by Dr. K. Sivaraman, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi (1973), Page 424.
11. Meikanda Devar Aruliccheythar Sivagnaana Bhodamum Vaarthika-ppozhippuraiyum, Maathava Sivagnaanaayogikall Aruliccheythar Sivagnaana Paadiyamum, The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society, Tinnevely, Ltd., Tinnelvely and Madras (March 1936).
12. Ibid., pages 85-86
13. Thiru. Vi. Kavin Sivagnaana Paadiya Aninthurai, Saiva Siddhanta p - Perumandram, Madras - 4, 1982.



6. The Printing History of the *Dravida Maa-Paadiyam*

Our Yogi enjoyed considerable fame even during his lifetime. Unfortunately, his contemporaries, though they revered his genius, left his life unwritten; and nothing therefore can be known beyond what casual mention and uncertain tradition have supplied.

The *arangketram* of his Maa-Paadiyam, perhaps, took place at or about 1775 A.D. After this event, the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam took into its impregnable custody the original manuscript transcribed in cadjan leaves. No one -- however great he be --, was permitted to make a copy of it. Only acknowledged savants who were in the good books of the Aadhinam, were suffered to peruse it, and that too in the premises of the Aadhinam only, under strict supervision amounting to surveillance. To my knowledge only three, namely Maha Vidwan Meenaakshisundaram Pillai, Sri la Sri Arumukha Naavalur and Sri Sapaapati Naavalur -- the two latter of Sri Lanka --, were privileged to read it. For over 145 years, and in one sense, even today, the complete Bhaashyam in print, is not available for the reading public. Dr. M. Arunachalam had vehemently attacked the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam in this connection, as according to him, "the root of this malady lay in the then Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam."¹ Dr. Arunachalam also adds : "The head pontiff locked it (the original manuscript of the Sivagnaana Bhaashyam indited by Sivagnaana Yogi) up in his almira, planning of course to go through it at his own leisure. He never planned to suppress it. But he passed away soon after. Sivagnaanaswami was a short-tempered person who would brook no fools. Swami had made enemies in the Aadhinam. Soon the place became hot for him and he had to get away from here... He never saw his manuscript afterwards and had no opportunity to revise it. Poor man, he did not even have a copy of it! The Sivagnaana Bhaashyam is a large book and copying of the large book was no easy matter. The original was rotting in the shelves of the Aadhinam unopened, unread and uncared for."²

Dr. Arunachalam, we are sorry to say, is needlessly harsh and his animadversion is but the outcome of his uncontrolled impatience. His

observations run counter to solid facts. Three eminent scholars did peruse the work and stood immensely benefited. Dr. Arunachalam, I am sure, was aware of the tradition that forbade the indiscriminate laying bare of works which were to be entrusted to the competent scholars (atikaari-s) for respectful cultivation.³

That the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam did not choose to print the Bhaashyam at any point of time is a fact which cannot be gainsaid. However, viewed from the proper perspective, the attitude of the Aadhinam is not tantamount to blameworthiness. Things happen as ordained. And the Bhaashyam eventually saw the light in peculiar circumstances.

An austere youngster of Tirunelveli District, known as Muthukumaraswami, towards the last quarter of the nineteenth century, fascinated by the irresistible greatness of Saiva Siddhantam, became a monk of the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam. He was truly a paragon of virtues. The then ruling pontiff of the Aadhinam who was captivated by his exemplary deportment, guided him with utmost care. The young Tambiran had free access to the Aadhinam Library. He cultivated in depth the canonical as well as sastraic works. He had an insatiable thirst for spiritual knowledge. Convinced of his competency, the pontiff eventually permitted him to study the Maa - Paadiyam. The Tambiran's admiration for our Yogi grew day by day. While so, in the year 1888, the pontiff of Suryanaar Koyil Aadhinam⁴ attained *paripoornam*. During this period this Aadhinam, was under the control of the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam which was empowered to appoint a successor to the deceased pontiff. The pontiff of the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam was convinced that Muthukumaraswami Tambiran was the natural choice in the context. By the grace of his guru, Muthukumaraswami Tambiran ascended the spiritual gadi and was thereafter known as Mutthukumaraswami Desikar. His spiritual reign lasted for thirty years (1888-1918). We have earlier indicated that the Desikar's devotion and love for our Yogi knew no bounds. Like Tirumoolar he thought thus : "May the world come by the bliss which is my portion." He was well aware of the hardship that he should undergo before he could devise ways and means for securing the possession of the well-guarded manuscript, even for a few days. Even after his becoming the pontiff of the Suryanaar Koyil Aadhinam, he so conducted himself that he gained in larger and larger measure the confidence of the pontiff of the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam. He then devised a strategy which was apparently disarming. He called on the pontiff at Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam, paid him obeisance and sojourned with him. When he was to leave the place, he persuaded the pontiff to lend the original manuscript for his deeper cultivation for a few days. The pontiff had no reason to suspect

the bona-fides of the Desikar. He gave the manuscript to him and told him to return it after a week.

No sooner did the Desikar return to his Aadhinam, than he did something that was not strictly ethical, thanks to which the Bhaashyam came to be printed after a few decades. The Desikar was blessed with a hexad of trustworthy Tambirans, they being Arumukha, Velappa, Chidambara, Dakshinamoorthi, Sivappirakaasa and Mutthukumaraswami. He so distributed the leaves of the manuscript that they could, with ease, complete the copying of the opus, well within the time prescribed. The work of copying was done in utmost secrecy. The Desikar felt secure and happy. However, it should be remembered that security is mortal's chiefest enemy. Nosey Parkers and Peeping Toms are ubiquitous. As the copying was nearing completion, an eavesdropper proceeded to Tiruvaavaduthurai and broke the intelligence to the pontiff. An officer of the Aadhinam was forthwith deputed to collect the original and confiscate the copy. Utterly flabbergasted, the Desikar meekly handed over to him the original as well as the copy. As he lay immensed in the Slough of Despond, his devoted chela who bore his very name, gently approached him and produced a copy of the Maa-Paadiyam. The Desikar was thrilled to the very cockles of his heart. On enquiry he was told that his chela (Mutthukumaraswamy Tambiran) had all along been burning his midnight oil to copy all the copies made by the other Tambirans and his own copy too. Unfortunately the copy did not contain the small end-portion of the Bhaashyam relating to the sixth sutra of the Sivagnaana Bhodam.

The original and the clandestinely-transcribed copy were locked up in the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam's iron-safe. The Aadhinam did not desire to print the Bhaashyam, then or later. Even to-day it is said, they are in the strict custody of the pontiff. We do not know whether the Desikar desired to publish the Bhaashyam even though he durst take the risk of having it copied, at his own peril. Perhaps his sole purpose was to teach it to his chosen disciples. That the Bhaashyam was not printed during his lifetime is a fact which is full of significance. The Bhaashyam got itself printed only three years after the death of the Desikar. As pointed out earlier the end-portion relating to the sixth sutra could not be incorporated into the printed work. However, it is surprising to find that two incomplete versions of the Bhaashyam were published even in 1906. Obviously these were the copies of the copy that was preserved by the Suryanaarkoyil Aadhinam.

Sri Swaminaatha Panditar of Sri Lanka published a Bhaashyam which was incomplete. By a clever device he made it appear that the work had

about it a sort of completeness which would, for the nonce, satisfy the reader. His work is called "Tiruvennai Nalloor Meykanda Devar Aruliccheyththa Siva Gnaana Bhodamum, Vaarthikamum, Pozhippuraiyum." This is one part of the work. The other part is called "Tirukkayilaaya Paramparai-th-Thiruvaa-vaduthurai Aadhipatthu Sivagnaana Swamikall Aruliccheyththa Dravida Maapaadiyam ennum Sivagnaanaabhoda Maapaadiyamum Situraiyum."⁵ The great Panditar had taken extraordinary efforts to bring the work in this shape. The prefatory portion of this work contains very valuable information. That fragmentary or complete copies of the Maa-Paadiyam were owned and studied by the then scholars is brought out very clearly by the Panditar.

He says that at or about 1886, he borrowed from M. Vaithilinga Pillai some initial portions of the Maa-Paadiyam, that he was even then fired by a desire to get at the entire work, that since the time he came to India he took steps to secure a copy of the whole work, that in this connection he contacted Sapaapati Naavalur, that the latter demanded Rs. 2,000 for his copy, that on coming to know that Sapaapati Naavalur had three copies which were more or less complete, he offered to buy all of them for the sum of Rs. 2,000, that the Naavalur was unwilling to comply with this offer, that he could eventually secure only an incomplete copy from a Vidwan, that he made a copy of that copy and that he brought out an edition on the basis of that copy in 1906 (Aani). The edition brought out by the Panditar contained the full text of the Bhaashyam so far as sutras 1 and 6 to 12 are concerned. It is needless to point out that here too, the end-portion relating to the sixth sutra is not incorporated into the text. In the month of Aavani of the same year, appeared "Meykanda Deva Naayanaar Aruliccheyththa Sivagnaanaabhoda Moolamum Sivagnaana Yogikall Yiyatri Aruliccheyththa Dravida Mahapaddiyam ennum Sivagnaana Bhaashyamum."⁶ This work was edited by the Madurai Tirugnaanasam bandhaswaamikall Aadhina Vidwan Subramania Pillai. Pillai says that after strenuous search for the manuscript over the years, he heard of the availability of a copy in a house in Chola Naadu (Chozha Naattill ore grahatthil), that when he went there, owing to the neglect of the occupants of the house, he could only find a copy partially eaten away by white-ants, that he secured the copy from the occupants and that he had it copied with care. The commentary for the first five sutras was the missing portion. Like Swaminaatha Panditar, Subramania Pillai too made use of the Siturai to fill in the gaps. J.M. Mallaswami Pillai contributed an introduction in English to this edition. He too (like Dr. Arunachalam Pillai) finds fault with the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam, and says : "Through the crass obstinacy of the Pandaara Sannidi of the Tiruvaavaduthurai

Mutt, the great Bhaashyam of Sivagnaana Yogi was not allowed to see the light of day."⁷

It is heartening to find that Maha Kavi Bharathi reviewed this work in his journal -- *India* dated December, 22, 1906. The review is worth quoting in full. "We read this work with great avidity. This was sent to us by the office of Vivekabhanu, Madurai. Like the Jews who were awaiting the advent of the Messiah, all the scholars well versed in Tamil, were for a long time, waiting for this work. Even we who are not so well-versed in Tamil, since our boyhood, was thinking thus : "Alas, we come to know that the persons at the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam have drawn an iron-curtain over the rare work -- the Aadi Dravida Maha Bhaashyam --, indited by Sivagnaana Munivar. Great indeed should this work be! When will it see the light of day?" So thinking we have heaved many a heavy sigh. We express our immense gratitude to the officials of Vivekabhanu who have printed this work, priced it low and sent us a copy. The work is not a whit less than what we expected it to be. We feel sorry over the unavailability to the publishers of some portions of the work. The contents of the work relate to the Saiva Siddhanta path. A description of its greatness may not square with the taste of the lay public. So, we refrain from descanting on its greatness. Yet we do firmly believe that Saiva Siddhantins and Tamil scholars of other faiths too, will lend their support to the work."⁸

The two editions that appeared in 1906 cannot be considered authentic. Yet they are not without their merits. We salute these pioneer - editors of the Maa - Paadiyam, for their labour of love and devotion to Saivism. When Swaminaatha Panditar heard that complaints -- oral and written --, against his proposed edition were made to the pontiff of the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam, he called on His Holiness in person. He was not taken to task. He but received the pontiff's benedictions for his undertaking.⁹

Credit goes to the Suryanaarkoyil Aadhinam for bringing out an edition of the Maa-paadiyam, at once outstanding and authentic, in 1921. This was the outcome of the selfless and tireless labour of Mutthukumaraswami Tambiran. Saivites will never feel tired of singing his glory. He was a great scholar of Tamil as well as Sanskrit. He was a grammarian par excellence who was hailed as the Ilakkanam Tambiran. He too was a commentator. He was born in Sri Lanka. He was a servitor of Siva and His servitors. He quit his family connection while yet a boy, came to Tamil Nadu and remained there inognito. A festschrift¹⁰ published in 1958 is the only booklet from which we learn of a modicum of his greatness. He

was absolutely self-effacing. He learnt of the multifoliate splendour of the Maa-Paadiyam at the feet of his guru who ardently desired that the Maa-Paadiyam should be made accessible to all the true practitioners of Saivism. He applied himself, heart and soul, to an in-depth study of the Maa-Paadiyam over the years, and made ready the text for the press. Though the contribution of the Co-Tambirans was insignificant and jejune, his self-effacing nature vouchsafed all credit to them. He was able to secure financial aid for the edition from Sivagnaana Siddhanta Sankam, Devakottai, K.A. Sivagaanam Pillai who hailed from the family¹⁰ of our Yogi, Prof. K. Subramania Pillai -- the Tagore Law Lecturer --, and Saiva Siddhanta Sabha, Periyakulam. From the title page of the work, we gather that the publication of the work was undertaken in obedience to the fiat of the late Pontiff -- Sri la Sri Mutthukumaraswami Desikar. It pains me to record here that all the other Aadhinams took meticulous care to dissociate themselves totally, from this significant publication. It can thus be seen that Srimad Ilakkanam Tambiran achieved a spectacular success in the teeth of formidable opposition. In the opus which he brought out, he chose not to mention his name anywhere.

Fifteen years after this publication, two editions of the Maa-Paadiyam appeared in 1936. When the Saiva Siddhanta Maha Samaajam (Madras) busied itself in bringing out an edition, the South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society (popularly known as Kazhakam) desired to vie with the Samaajam, and if possible, excel it. Both these institutions desired to bring out low-priced editions of the Maa- Paadiyam. Each copy was to cost one rupee and eight annas. When the Samaajam came to know of the extraordinary efforts taken by the Kazhakam to bring out a prestigious edition packed with useful materials, it chose to reduce the price of its work to one rupee. The great Tamil savant Tiru. V. Kaliyaanasundara Mudaliyaar contributed an enthusiastic and perceptive foreword to the Samaajam edition."¹¹ The Kazhakam edition proved to be the richer of the two.¹²

In this connection, mention must be made of an interesting episode which is proof positive of the fact that some scholars are not above board. It was the Samaajam that sent its text to the press, first. A Tamil Pandit who was connected with the Samaajam and the Kazhakam indulged in an unethical act to help the Kazhakam steal a march over the Samaajam. He daily visited the Sadhu Press where the Samaajam's work was getting printed, surreptitiously purloined a printed forme -- the day's output --, and gingerly coursed his way to the Kazhakam. His unusually continuous presence in the Sadhu Press was not taken serious note of, in the initial stages. However the interest evinced by the Vidwan in the daily output of

the press, stirred the suspicion of few in the press who kept a strict watch over him and eventually caught him red-handed. Thereafter the Vidwan was not suffered to enter the premises of the press.

It was the edition of the Kazhakam which came out first, The Kazhakam also brought out a second edition in 1952.¹³ The observation of Dr. M. Arunachalam that it "took forty years for the book to go into another edition" is obviously an error caused by oversight.¹⁴

Dr. S.V. Subramaniam brought out his edition of the Maa- Paadiyam in 1986. This is a very defective edition. The editor did not choose to incorporate into this edition the end-portion relating to the sixth sutra which was brought to light by Vajravel Mudaliyaar as early as 1977.¹⁵

This in short is the printing history of the Dravida Maa- Paadiyam. In this context we should gratefully acknowledge the services of the late-lamented scholar Vajravel Mudaliyaar.¹⁶ He is the first to translate into English the entire Maa-Paadiyam. This indeed is a very commendable work. With this as the basis, an improved version should be brought out in current idiom for a better and greater understanding of Saiva Siddhantam. The signal service of Vajravel Mudaliyaar is this. All the available editions of the Maa-Paadhyam are incomplete. It is his English translation that contains a complete version of the Maa- Paadiyam. Dr. V.A. Devasenapathi did well to invite him to deliver a catena of lectures in 1976, on the Maa-Paadiyam under the auspices of the Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras. The lectures were published as a book called Sivagnaana Paadiya- th-Thiravu. This in the opinion of many discerning scholars is the best guide for the Dravida Maa-Paadiyam.



NOTES

1. Saiva Siddhanta (Journal, April 1987), Vol. XXII, Number 1 (Madras) The Printing History of the Sivagnaana Bhaashyam, by M. Arunachalam, Page 35.
2. Ibid.
3. A Tamil Verse is in point.
"When the Weaver bird gave a piece of advice to the rain- drenched monkey, it jumped and tore the bird's nest; if wisdom and instruction are offered to the base, the offerer is in for trouble."
4. Saiva Siddhantam is propagated by two paramparai-s, they being Nandi Paramparai and Skanda Paramparai. The Aadhinams at Dharmapuram, Tiruvaavaduthurai and other places belong to Nandi Paramparai. The Suryaarkoyil Aadhinam which is older than even the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam, represents the Kanda Paramparai. Its original preceptor is Lord Muruga Himself.
5. This work was printed by Saivavidyaanupaalana Yantira Saalai, Madras in 1906 (Paraabhava - Aani).
6. This work was printed by Vivekabhaanu Acchiantirasaalai, Madurai in 1906 (Paraabhava, Aavani).
7. Introduction by J.M. Nallaswami Pillai to Item 6.
8. Bharathi Darisanam, part one, compiled by Ilasai Manian, New Century Book House (Private) Ltd., Madras. Second Edition (1986), pages 447 and 448.
9. Swaminaatha Panditar's work, already cited. Page 7 (Preface).
10. Ilakkanacchuvaamikall ennum Srimad Mutthuk-Kumaara-th- Thambiraan-Ninaivu Malar, Kalaa Nilaiya Pathippakam, Jaffna (1958).
11. Sivagnaana Paadiyam, Saiva Siddhanta Maha Samaajam, Madras (1936). Pages 5 to 22 - Aninthurai.
12. Meykanda Devar Aruliccheytha Sivagnaana Bhodamum Maa-Tava Sivagnaana Yogikall Aruliccheytha Sivagnaana Paadiyamum, published by the S.I.S.W.P. Society Tinnevely Ltd., March 1936.
13. This work was printed at Appar Acchakam, 2/140, Broadway, Madras-1.
14. Vide Item 1, page 41.
15. Vide pages 190 and 191, Sivagnaana Paadiya-th-Thiravu. by Vajravel Mudaliyaar, Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras (1977).

16. Sivagnaana Maapaadiyam, (translated by K. Vajravelu Mudaliar), Madurai Kamaraj University, 1985. The note at page 323 is as follows. "The following continuation is taken from the impression of the palmyra leaves preserved in the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam. (See page 189(3) of my 'Key to Sivagnaana Paadiyam' in Tamil, published by the Madras University in 1977.)"



7. Kaanchi Puranam

I have at length dwelt upon the importance of the role played by the Tamil Sthala Puranas, in my foreword to Dr. V.R. Maadhavan's work : "Thamizhil Thala Puranangkall - Part One."¹ Let me but briefly state here a few salient features constitutive of the much-needed backdrop to supply the reader with a clearer perception.

The Tamil Sthala Puranas, according to David Dean Shulman, "provide us with a regional variant of Hindu Mythology of peculiar interest and importance, not least because of the long tradition of continuous cultural activity in this region."² Yet this genre of religious literature still remains, for ever to the Tamils, a terra incognita.

In the Forties and the Fifties, a wave of disestablishment swept the Tamil Country. Ithihasas, Puranas -- in particular the sthala puranas --, stood condemned and contemned. The champions of this movement were glib orators who, by their highfalutin haranguing, dinned into the unwary youths an implacable hatred for all works that were suspected to have some nexus with Sanskrit. Every town vied with every other town in making bonfires of sacred writings. Though the wave of acerbity began to ebb, yet even now, not many have taken kindly to the Sthala Puranas. Slowly -- but not to be deemed sufficient --, the interest in Tamil mythology is getting revived, thanks to the writings of scholars not belonging to the Tamil Nadu. It is the Occident which is today the Paraclete of the Orient. Let us welcome knowledge irrespective of its source.

The eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries ushered in the salubrious climate for the flourishing of the Sthala Puranas. Maha Vidwan Meenakshisundaram Pillai composed as many as twenty two sthala puranas. Dr. U.Ve. Swaminatha Iyear, in his biography of his guru, has narrated the events following Pillai's Arangketram of his Kumbakonam Puranam. It is as follows : "After the Arangketram of the Kumbakonam Puranam, the local dignitaries honored him with silk and shalws and clothes, besides a cash present of two thousand rupees secured through public donation.³ They had the palm- leaf encliridion of the Puranam placed in the howdah

of a tusker which was taken round in a procession marked by great jubilee. A palanquin was purchased in which Pillai was borne to some distance by some of the dignitaries themselves. Thus, even thus, they translated their love for the good old custom demonstrative of devotion to Tamil, into action." This was in 1866. The Tamils of the last century, *cela va sans dire*, were sharply alive to the energising influence of the Sthala Puranas.

We do not know when the Kaanchi Puraanam came to be indited. Neither do we know when its Arangketram took place. However we do know that on the day when it commenced, certain individuals were out to scuttle the ship. Some details about these that suffered from envy and hatred, are mentioned by Dr. U.Ve. Swaminatha Iyear⁴. Dr. Shulman's account of the events which is based on Siva Sri Arunaivadivel Mudaliyaar's version is as follows.

"At the first recitation (arankerram) of the Kanchipuranam, those who were jealous of Civagnanayoki tried to embarrass him. Acting under their instructions, an *otuvar* (one trained in reciting the Tamil hymns of the Tevaram) raised an objection to the third invocatory verse, which was addressed to Nataraja. "A purana about Kanchipuram should begin with an invocation to Ekamparanatar (Siva at Kanchipuram), not the god of Citamparam," he said with scorn. Kacchiyappar, a pupil of Civagnanayoki, asked the *otuvar* to recite the Tevaram hymns proper to Kanchipuram. The *otuvar* readily agreed. Solemnly he began to recite; but no sooner had he intoned the customary opening formula, "*Tirucchirram-palam*" than Kacchiyappar stopped him. "Should you not say '*Pirutivi-yampalam*' if you are reciting the Tevaram of Kanchi?" he asked. "It is the custom to say '*Tirucchirram-palam*' before the hymns of all sacred shrines," said the *otuvar*. "Yes" replied Kacchiyappar, and it is likewise the custom to invoke Nataraja at the beginning of all Saiva compositions, as you would have known had you read any."⁵

Kaanchi Puranam appeared for the first time in print in the Vekudaaniya year (1878)⁶. This edition comprised both the *Kaandams* -- the first by our Yogi and the second by his disciple namely Kacchiyappar. Here we are concerned only with the work of the Yogi's. Though it is said by the Yogi himself that the work is a translation from Sanskrit, I am convinced that our Yogi has structured his Puranam on the edifice of St. Sekkizhaar's Puranam of Tirukkurippu-th- Thondar. This puranam is told in 128 verses. The first 110 verses sing the glory of *Tondai Mandalam* and in particular Kanchipuram -- the place of the Tondar's *Avatar*.⁷ They contain a mine of information. Kaanchi is as great as Kaasi (Varanasi). "Kaanchi of boundless learning" (Kalviyil Karai Ilaathia Kaanchi) are the

words of St. Appar. It was here Aadi Sankara Bhagawad Paada established his Sarvaangka Matam. The Saiva Siddhanta Aadhinam at Kaanchi known as the Tondai Mandala Aadhinam is of considerable antiquity. It is said that the sacred mango tree in the Ekaambaresvar Temple is at least three millennia old. Hieun-Tsiang sojourned at Kanchi to learn many things. Of Kaanchi he says :

"The country of Ta-lo-pi-ch'a (Dravida) is about 6,000 li in circuit; the capital of the country is called Kanchipuram, and is about thirty li round... The climate is hot, the character of the people courageous. They are deeply attached to the principles of honesty and truth, and highly esteem learning.... There are some hundreds of sangharamas and 10,000 priests. They all study the teaching of the Sthavira School belonging to the Great Vehicle. There are some eighty Deva temples, and many heretics called Nirgranthas... The city of Kanchipuram is the native place of Dharmapala Bhodisattva."⁸

Attracted by the multifoliate glory of Kaanchi, our Yogi indited his Puranam. Inter alia, it is the architectonics of the Yogi's Kaanchi Puranam that fascinates the close cultivators of his work. Nineteen are the invocatory verses. The Yogi then gives the reason for inditing the Puranam. His Apology is the content of the three succeeding verses. After this comes a verse which is the *Sirappu-p-paayiram* (the special prolegomenon), obviously indited by an admirer or chela of our Yogi. The work is in 65 patalams (chapters) comprising in all 2,742 verses.

In and around Kaanchi are holy shrines hailed by one or more of the triad of the Tevaram hymnodists. For purposes of historicization of the shrines, our Yogi chooses as the first shrine Kacchineri Kaaraikkaadu -- a shrine celebrated in the hymns of St. Sambandhar. Then he proceeds, as in circumambulation, and eventually arrives at Tiruvekambam -- the main shrine. He then narrates the episode relating to the flood that was about to sweep away the Sivalinga to which Kaamaakshi was offering pooja and her embracing the linga to save it from the onslaught of the flood, as a result of which the Lord chose to wear on His person the nipple-marks of the great Goddess. Then the wedding of Kaamaakshi and Ekambar are celebrated by the Yogi in many an ecstatic hymn. The Yogi also dwells on the mighty marvels associated with Kaanchi. Ultimately the Yogi announces the beatitude one gains by cultivating the puranam. It is a life of virtue that is commended by the puranam. The Yogi explains the various virtues and values that a Saivite should acquire and foster, for it is the virtuous soul that eventually gets one with the divine feet of Siva and enjoys bliss sempiternal.

Our Yogi devotes a patalam to each shrine. Shrines, the histories of which are brief, are included in the histories of the more famous shrines that are close by and are therefore elaborately dealt with. Barring Kanchi Mayaanam, the shrines of Vaaleeccharam, Vellakkambam, Kallakkambam and Nallakkambam are included in the "Thazhuva-k-kuzhainta Patalam." Bearing in mind the historical nexus, his descriptions of Ganesam, Gatakesam, Yugesam etc., are incorporated into the "*Thazhuva-k-kuzhainta Patalam*" and the "*Siva Punya Patalam*". As the accent is on the order of the shrines, the narration is not chronological.⁹

The entire Puranam is gravid with great truths, The work is replete with rare as well as subtle concepts. The size of a Patalam is no indispensable indicant of its worth. Short patalams too are great patalams. They are packed with vital and energizing message. For instance, the Santaana-p-Patalam made up of thirteen verses, speaks of the true nature of Pasudharma and Pati-dharma; the Banaadaresa Patalam comprising a septet of verses, speaks ex cathedra, of the indispensable need of the association of the great, for the virtuous man, and the Muppuraari Kotta-p-Patalam of eleven verses dins into the reader the nature of Upaaya-charya, Unmai-charya etc.

The great truths treasured by the Upanishads, Ithihasas, Puranas, Saiva Aagamas, Sanskrit and Tamil classics etc., find apposite exposition in the Kaanchi Puranam. Indeed the work is replete with the Upanishadic and Puranic dicta happily and clearly rendered into charming Tamil. Our Yogi is a translator par excellence. No superfluous or ambiguous word mars his translation. He tunnels his way into the roots of otherwise unyielding vocables of Sanskrit and surfaces up with ease grasping in this commodious hold etymological nuggets. These he cleanses by a process peculiar to him and then displays them with utmost advantage. We are in debt to the Yogi for his unerring exposition of the mantras.

His sole goal is the propagation of Saiva Siddhanta for the upliftment of the soul. He is an adept in the techniques of hermeneutics. Consistency is his forte. Tenets of Saiva Siddhantam pervade the whole work. It is imperative that at least a few instances are to be mentioned here. The verse beginning with the words "Maayei Kaariya" is a little thesis on the Parigraha Sakti of the Pati. The message is that the forms of Maya pervaded by the presence of Lord Siva, are truly His gracious forms. The verse beginning with the words "Bhoda Melaaka" dwells effectively on the concept of 'Vaasanaa Mala'. Verse 17 of the Tirunaattu-p-patalam is a restatement of the Vedic affirmation which says : "Ekam sad vipraah bahudaa vadanti." Verse 32 of the said Patalam celebrates the force of,

what is known as 'Sarkaarya Vaada.' Speaking of the splendour of Kaanchi, the Yogi introduces a happy comparison. The Devas who were of the opini on that their citadel was the greatest, hung their heads in shame, when they beheld the city of Kaanchi. They are likened to them that pursued for long other faiths and eventually embraced the heavenly Saivism.¹⁰ Dharma-Vidya--the adoration of the Lord in the cave of heart --, is the content of the verse that begins with the words : "Kongku Avizh..."¹¹ In fine, our Yogi has so indited the Puranam that it serves as an unerring guide which helps the Siddhantin the better to understand the Meykanda Sastras.

Kaanchi Puranam, is a Smriti of Smriti-s. This is apparent from the thirty first verse of the 'Ozhukka-p-Patalam'. This verse says : "This puranam is indeed the qunitessence of the Vedas. It bestows on the sincere reader the quartet of the purushaarthas namely Dharma, Wealth, Joy and Deliverance. It is a repository of all sacred lore. It hails the glories of Ekambar and His Consort Kaamakshi. It is a fine treatise of Varnaasrama Dharma. This should therefore be cultivated with care." The Ozhukka-p-Patalam" is the essence of ethics and didactics. It contains all that a *saadhaka* should know and needs to know.

Kaanchi Puranam is the Saivite Encyclopedia. It serves too as a compendium of Saiva Siddhanta. The six systems of Indian philosophy are also dealt with in this work. It is also an excellent opus on Tamil Prosody. The Yogi has handled the multifarious metres which have enriched Tamil, with laudable dexterity. Scholars like Ulrike Niklas.¹³ would do well to make a special study of the metres employed by the Yogi and bring out their greatness in the light of comparative grammar. Some of the verses of the Surakaresa-p-Patalam (comprising in all 45 verses) deserve to be inscribed in plates of gold with letters of diamond. Rich examples of *tiripu*, *irandati-p-paataka madakku*, *murasa bandham*, *gomootri*, *koota sadukkam*, *maattiraicchurukkam*, *maattirai varutthanai*, *ezhutthu varutthanai*, *ubhaya naaga bandham*, *saruppathopatram*, *maalai maatru*, *kaathai karappu* etc., are met with in this patalam. Our Yogi is also a chitra-kavi sui generis. An anecdote rife in this connection is worth recording here.

Our Yogi usually took a long time for the performance of his diurnal pooja. His chela Kacchiyappar would not take so much time for his pooja. Once when Kacchiyappar came to call on his guru, he found him absorbed in his pooja. The chela gently withdrew himself and came to the rearyard of the matam. He found the ground strewn with fresh sand. He was for some days working on an intricate chitra kavi (verse in pictorial form).

He drew the figure on the ground with his finger and busied himself in his composition. However he could not think of that one letter which would fit in to complete the verse. He was substituting letter after letter, all in vain. Meanwhile our Yogi who had completed his pooja, came to the backyard, unobserved by his chela who was absorbed in his exercise. He took in the situation in no time, and addressing his chela said : "How is it that such and such letter has not been thought of by you?" That was indeed the one and only letter that could do the trick and complete the verse. Now everything fell into its place thanks to the letter supplied by the Yogi. The chela who was by himself great realised that the guru was always greater than the disciple.

In the Kaanchi Puranam are many chitra-kavis. Usually when a chitra-kavi is indited, though it will strictly conform to grammatical rules, it will be lacking in poetry. However our Yogi has demonstrated that chitra-kavi informed by poetic excellence is not impossible. Our Yogi is an expert palindromist. A palindromic verse is called 'Maalai Maatru' in Tamil. I give below a one-line palindrome of our Yogi's.

"Vee Yaa Vaa Maa Maa Vaa Yaa Vee."

The syllables read both words.

A team of well-equipped scholars should take up the Kaanchi Puranam for research. It should be approached from many angles. If this be done, a series of scholarly tomes will be the outcome. In days to come such a project may be pursued. As on date, there is only one slender volume which briefly delineates the many-sided splendor of the Kaanchi Puranam. This work is by a Tagore Law Lecturer called K. Subramania Pillai.¹²

NOTES

1. Tamizhil Thala Puraanangkall by Dr. V.R. Maadhavan, Paavai Publications, C-1. Tamil University Staff Quarters, Trichy High Road, Thanjavur - 5, (1995).
2. Tamil Temple Myths by David Dean Shulman (page 3), Princeton University Press, New Jersey (1980).
3. Sri Mecnakshisundaram Pillai Avarkalin Charitthiram (Part I) by Dr. U.Ve. Swaminatha Iyer (pages 274-275), Tamil University, Thanjavur (1986).
4. Ibid., Part II, pages 44-46.
5. Tamil Temple Myths by David Dean Shulman (page 87), Princeton University Press, New Jersey (1980).
6. Kaanchi-p-Puraanam, Aadi Kalaanidi Acchukkoodam, Madras, Vekudaaniya -- Purattaasi.
7. St. Sekkizhar's Periya Puranam, Part - 1, translated by T.N. Ramachandran, (page lxxxvii), Tamil University, Thanjavur (1).
8. Kanchi of The Early Seventh Century in Saint Sekkizhaar by T.N. Ramachandran, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi (1994).
9. Kaanchi-p-Puraanam edited by C. Arunaivadivelu Mudaliyaar (Preface - page 15), Kumaran Acchakam, Kaanchipuram (1937).
10. Ibid., Tirunakara-p-Patalam, verse 4.
11. Ibid., verse 19.
12. Sivagnaana Munivar - Varalaarum Nool Aaraaicchiyum, by K. Subramani Pillai M.A., M.L., Hilaal Press, Tirunelveli (1932).

8. The Other Works of Sivagnaana Yogi

Our Yogi--a polymath--, indited as many as twenty eight works. Of these, three relate to grammar, fifteen to literature, six to Saiva Siddhan-tam and one to logic. He also translated three Sanskrit works into Tamil.

Works on Grammar :

1. Tolkaappiya Sootthira Virutthi

A fair assessment of this work is met with in the article which bears the very name of this work, by Siva Sri. T.C.S. Ramacchangu Pandian.¹. The Yogi's work brings out the greatness of the Paayiram (Proem) and also the first sutra of the Tolkaappiyam -- a work on Tamil grammar of the pre- Christian Era. Before the advent of this work, many were the doubts by which the scholar stood buffeted. Our Yogi's clarification of these points, comes as a boon. In this connection the Yogi has made use of Patanjali's Maha Bhaashyam. Yet at the same time, he also brings to the fore the special features of Tamil.

2. Ilakkana Vilkkacchooraavali

Our Yogi wrote this work in refutation of a work called Ilakkana Vilakkam -- a work by a devotee - scholar of the Dharmapuram Aadhi-nam. Our Yogi was perhaps egged on to indite this opus by his Aadhinam, as in those days the two Aadhinams were at loggerheads. Our Yogi criticises the Ilakkana Vilakkam and raises as many as eighty two objec-tions. The work which stands attacked by our Yogi, is indeed an excellent opus on Tamil grammar. It is even hailed as Kuttittholkaappiyam (Shorter Tolkaappiyam). Maha Vidwan Meenaakshisundaram Pillai is all praise for this work. C.W. Damodaram Pillai brought out an edition of this work. His preface forms an able defence of the work. Our Yogi, it is said, need not have indited this work of condemnation. According to Lord Macaulay, a man of genius and virtue is but a man.

3. Nannool Virutthiurai

Nannool is work on Tamil grammar. The author is Bhavanandi - - a Samana Saint. It is the work of the late twelfth or the early thirteenth century. This work has a commentary of Mayilainaathar, also a Samana.

Not satisfied with this, Sankara Namasivaayar of Tirunelveli chose to write a new commentary. He was a disciple of Swaminatha Desikar -- a Tambiran of the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam. Our Yogi chose to revise the commentary of Sankara Namasivaayar and amplify it. It is this amplified commentary (Virutthiurai) that holds the field. In this connection the following discrepancy has to be taken note of. Nannool differs from Tolkaappiyam in many respects. For instance, Tolkaappiyam says there are only three Saarbu Ezhutthus. Nannool, however, enumerates ten, in this connection. Such fundamental differences are necessarily creative of problems. Lack of impartiality is to be attributed to the Yogi, as while he chose to condemn Ilakkana Vilakkam -- a work in unison with the rules of Nannool --, in the light of Tolkaappiyam, he chose to amplify the commentary of Sankara Namasivaayar on Nannool.

Literary Works : 1. Kaanchi Puranam.

We have at length dealt with this work in chapter seven.

2. Somesar Muthu Mozhi Venpaa

The word Somesa conveys a twofold meaning. It may refer either to the Lord of Chandra or Uma. This work is made up of 133 venpaas, a venpaa for each chapter of the Tirukkurall. The second part of Yogi's venpaa is a distich from the Tirukkurall. The idea or principle illustrated by this distich, is the content of the Yogi's first half of the venpaa. This work is didactic. The verses being venpaas, can be memorised with ease. Each verse is wisdom in capsule-form. For inditing this work, the Yogi has had recourse to such works like Periya Puranam, Kanda Puranam, Ramayanam, Maha Bharatam, Srimad Bhagawatam, Sivagnaana Bho-dam, Tamil Tirumurais, Kaasi Kaandam, Sekkizhaar Naayanaar Pu-ranam, Tamil and Sanskrit Puranams, Pancha Tantra, Hidopadesa, Naidatam, Iraiyanar Akapporull Urai, Tiruvaathavoorar Puranam, Upadesa Kaandam, Raghu Vamsam, Prabu Linga Leelai, Bhiramotthira Kaandam, Vikramorvasiyam and Jeevaka Chintaamani. An excellent edition of this work appeared in 1921.

3. Kulatthoor Pathitruppatthu Antaati

Antaati, according to Dr. G.U. Pope, is a work in anaphoretic verses. It usually contains a century of verses. A Pathitruppatthu Antaati is in ten different metres. The work under reference is on the presiding deity of Kulatthoor. Somesar Muthu Mozhi Venpaa too is on the same deity. On His Consort our Yogi wrote a work called Amutaambikai-p-pillai-th-Thamizh. Kulatthoor is also known as Kulantaapuri.

The Kulatthoor Pathitruppatthu Antaati opens thus :

"Glory, learning, wealth, wisdom, sovereignty
Over earth and heaven are indeed theirs who
Fold their hands in adoration
Of the blue-throated Lord of beatueous Kulantaapuri."

The concluding verse runs thus :

"May Tondai Naadu and Kulantai where dwell patrons
Whose munificence puts to shame even nimbi, flourish!
We hail Amutaambikai! We do hail Soma Naayakan --
The Lord -God of the celestials! May the servitors
Of the servitors of His hallowed feet be blessed
With eightfold wealth! May they for ever hail the Lord
And gain that glory which is true and eternal."

4. Ilasai Pathitruppatthu Antaai.

Ilasai is Ilangkaadu which is said to be near Madras. We do not know whether this place has been identified. The name of the presiding deity of this place is Akattheecchurar (Agastya). His consort bears the name Pradaana Naayaki. This work is in magnification of Akattheecchurar. Salient features of Saiva Siddhantam are explicated in this work. The opening verse of this opus is as follows :

"The trinocular Lord of matted hair who dances
In the Crematory, wears a garland of Konrai;
He abides in Ilangkaadu rich in flowers;
Lo! He has my bosom as His very name."

The Yogi concludes the work invoking the benedictions of the Lord for the weal and welfare of His servitors.

5. Kalaisai Pathitruppatthu Antaati.

Kalaisai is the village known as Tottikkalai. This is a Tevaara Vaippu-thalam, id est, a shrine mentioned in one or more of the Tevaaram hymns, though it does not have to its credit a whole Patikam (decad). Tottikkalai Subramaniya Tambiran was a chela of our Yogi and at his request, our Yogi sojourned in this village. The chela was a bard, sui generis. He authored what is known as Kalaisai Sledai Venpaa. Sledai (Skt. Slesha) is pun.

The work of the Yogi opens thus :

"He is the novel One : He is the ancient One
He abides within and without; He is the old One;
He is the young One; He is the Alpha and the Omega.

Who can ever by his intellect, comprehend the glory
Of Him -- the Lord-God of Kalaisai?"

An excellent edition of this work appeared in 1951.⁴

6. Kacchi Aananda Rudresar Patikam

This work is in eleven verses. Kacchi is Kaanchi-(puram). Kaanchi is a holy city of temples. Aananda Rudresam is one of the shrines of Kaanchi. According to our Yogi's Kaanchi Puranam, from the west of Kaayaarokanam up to the north-western point where Sarvateertham is situate, are many Rudresams where the 118 Rudras offered worship to Lord Siva. Aananda Rudresam is one of the shrines located in this region. This is half a kilometre north-west of the Tiruvaavaduthurai Matam which is in Pillaiyaar Paalaiyam. Aananda Rudresa is the chief of the 118 Rudras. Our Yogi's disciple, Kacchiyappar is the author of Kacchi Aananda Rudresar Vandu Vidu Thoothu.⁵

7. Tiruvekambar Aananda-k-Kalippu

This is a musical composition. The heroine addressing her confidante, sings in ecstasy the glories of the hero--the presiding deity of Ekaambaram. It opens thus :

"Bliss, bliss it is, my dear companion
To behold the divine dance of Kambar!
It is bliss, sheer bliss, my dear!

If you seek not a different wordly object
After giving up the one to which you held on,
If you for ever give up phenomenal joy
And desire to get oned with that One --
The One that is neither one nor two --,
That One will bless you with the bliss of the Word."

8. Kalaisai Sengkazhuneer Vinaayakar Pillai-th-Thamizh

This work is in 53 verses. This abounds in Puranic episodes. Siva's gift of the Disc to Vishnu, His gutting with fire the triple skyey citadels, His burning of Manmata, His kicking Death to death, His quaffing of the halaahala poison, His assumption of the form of Saraba, His quelling of Narasimha, His removal of a head of Brahma's, His wearing on the crest the crescent, His killing of the tiger and the tusker etc., are dealt with in this work. Among the episodes of Lord Vinaayakar, a few, such as His destruction of Gajamukhaasura, His installation of the five elements in His own form, His wearing a crescent and His buffeting of Ravana are narrated.

According to our Yogi, worsip of Vinaayaka averruncates our troubles here and hereafter.

9. Amutaambikai Pillai-th-Thamizh⁶

This work is in magnification of the Mother Goddess Amutaambikai enshrined in Kulatthoor. In this work, many of the salient features of Saiva Siddhantam are found incorporated. Such incorporation is at once apposite and admirable. The work is also rich in figures of speech as well as thought. Mother Goddess is Sakti in Saiva Siddhantam and it is through Sakti, Siva redeems souls. The role of Sakti in Saiva Siddhantam is central. In Vaishnavism, it is marginal.

10. Akilaandeswarai Patikam

Our article on this Patikam⁷ brings out the glory of this work. In our view this work is in the nature of progressive revelation. We have therefore likened the message of this work to 'Dasakaariyam'. An excellent commentary on this work by Ilakkanam Swamy appeared in 1958.⁸ A translation of this work is included in the Appendix.

11. Tiruvekambar Antaati.

An Antaati is usually in one hundred verses. This work is in 94 verses. Truly speaking, this work is Kaanchi Puraanam in a nut-shell. Kaanchi is known by twelve names, they being (1) Bhuvanasaaram, (2) Mum-moorti Vaasam, (3) Vishnupuram, (4) Kaanchi, (5) Kalisitthu, (6) Layasitthu, (7) Sakalasiddhipuram, (8) Tapomayam, (9) Brahmapuram, (10) Aadi Peetham, (11) Kanni Kaappu and (12) Sirapuram.

In this work Lord Siva is hailed as Ekambar Vaazhvu, Maavurai Kamban, Kambatthan, Kaamakotti Manaalan, Kambam Meviya Vaan Porull, Kambai-k-Kambar, Ekambavaanan, Kamba Maavadi Vaazhuvan, Kacchi Vaanavan etc.

An excellent edition of this work appeared in 1967.⁹

12. Tirumullaivaayil Antaati

This work is in 100 verses. Two are the Tirumullai Vaayils in Tamil Nadu. This work celebrates the Northern Tirumullaivaayil close to Vaishnavi Temple (Madras). This work is compact of tiribu and yamakam verses. *Naduvezhutthu Alangkaaram* -- a figure of speech cum *chitra-kavi*-, is seen at its best in this work. The presiding deity of Thirumullaivaayil is called Maasilaamani. A verse in *Naduvezhutthu Alangkaaram* is so contrived by our Yogi that name of the deity is yielded by the verse embodying the Alangkaaram. The verse is as follows :

"Putalvi Mann Oreunti Kanjam Telivi
Munpin Nallezhutthaan."

| <i>Word</i> | <i>Its equivalent</i> |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Putalvi | Ku <i>maa</i> ri |
| Mann (earth) | Kaa <i>si</i> ni |
| Ore unti (Ore aaru) | Paa <i>laaru</i> |
| Kanjam | Taama rai |
| Telivu | Tu <i>ni</i> vu |

The second syllables of the above trisyllabic words are : Maa, si, laa, ma and ni. These constitute the word Maasilaamani which is the name of the presiding deity of Tirumullaivaayil.

13. Tirutthondar Tirunaama-k-kovai

This work is in 23 distichs including the invocatory verse. It celebrates the 63 named servitors of Siva. It also hails the nine groups of Siva's servitors. This work is a shorter version of St. Sundarar's more famous work called the Tirutthondatthokai.

14. Panchaakkara Desikar Maalai

This work in ten verses, is in magnification of the Founder - Pontiff of the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam. The work opens thus :

"You are Gnosis, opulence of Grace, perfeccion and Majesty!
You are the kin unto servitors, my dear life and ruby great!
You keep aloof from the unmelting hearts! You are
The great and transcendental Nectar of Bliss!
You, O Panchaakkara Desika, are for sure,
An incarnation of loving kindness!"

15. Kamba Ramayana Mutal Seyyull Sangkotthara Virutthi

This prose work is sheer verbal gymnastics. Our Yogi was an adept in many things. He knew how to handle words. He also knew how to strangle them. He can kill things and by his skill revive them.

Work on Epistemology

Tarukka Sangkirakanum Annam Bhattiyamum

Indian Logic is different from European Logic. Indian Logic is known as *Alavai* in Tamil. This is referred to by the Sanskrit equivalents : *Aan-veekshiki*, *Nyaayavistara*, *Nyaayadarshana*, *Tarkasastra* and *Pramana Sastra*. "*Kaanaadam Paanineeyam ca Sarvasastropakaarakam*" is a Sanskrit adage which is oft-quoted in India. It means : "Logic and Grammar are indispensable aids for every branch of knowledge." Tamil *Alavai* is

derived from Sanskrit sources. Our Yogi, therefore, translated the standard work in Indian Logic, namely Tarka Sangraham by Annam Bhattar into Tamil. Not only that. He also translated Bhattar's own commentary on his work called Annam Bhattiyam also known as Tarka- Sangraha Deepikai. Besides this there are also other commentaries called Nyaaya Bhodini, Nirukkti, Siddhanta Chandrodayam, Tarka Sanghraya Chandrikai, Pada Krityam and Tarka Sangrahopaniyaasam. For Tarka Sangraha Deepikai there are five commentaries called Hanumatiyam, Nilakantiyam, Mukunta Bhattiyam, Deepikaa Prakaasikai and Deepika Vyaakyaanam. Nellippuzhai Vidwan Sivaananda Iyer has translated the commentaries called Nyaaya Bhodini, Pada Krityam and Nelakantiyam besides Tarka Sangraham.¹⁰

Religious Works

1. Sivagnaana Maa-Paadiyam

This is dealt with in chapter 5.

2. Sivagnaanabhoda Sitururai

This is also dealt with in chapter 3. Yet a word or two about its greatness may not be out of place, here. It is the Sitururai that is the terse commentary. It serves as a manual of Saiva Siddhantam. This too cannot be read with ease. Simplified versions of the Sitururai are being published from time to time. The earliest of these is by Mutthiah Pillai of Tuticorin.¹¹ Kaasi Vaasi Senthinaatha Iyer brought out the manifold splendour of the Sitururai in the light of the Saiva Aagas, in his work called Sivagnaana Bodha Vachanaalangkaara Deepam.¹² The works of the Tiruvaavaduthurai Adhinam Pundit T.S. Meenaakshisundaram Pillai are also very helpful¹³. The late-lamented Kazhakam editor Iraamanaathan Pillai brought out a highly Tamilised version of the Sitururai.¹⁴ In this context it is to be observed that the world-famous work of Dr. Sivaranan namely Saivism in Philosophical Perspective, is based on the Sitururai.¹⁵ It is the Sitururai which is to be regarded as the standard text - book of Saiva Siddhantam.

3. Sivagnaana Siddhiyaar (Supakkam) : Pozhippurai

The commentary in verse on the Sivagnaanabhodam is Sivagnaana Siddhiyaar by Arul Nandi Sivaachaarya. Siddhiyaar is a work in two parts. The first part is Parapakkam (Skt. Parapaksha). The second is Supakkam (Skt. Svapaksha). Supakkam has six commentaries. Our Yogi's Pozhippurai is one of them. Based on the commentary of our Yogi's, two commentaries, one by Mutthiah Pillai of Tuticorin¹⁶ and the other by Tiruvilankam Pillai of Sri Lanka,¹⁷ have appeared.

4. "Ennai ip pavatthil" ennum seyyut Siva Sama Vaada Urai Maruppu

This prose work is in about eighty lines only. This was written to refute the interpretation of Gnaanappirakaasar of Sri Lanka. This Gnaanappirakaasar is one of the six commentators of Sivagnaana Siddhiyaar (Supakkam). He was also a great *tyaagi*. He spent many years in Kaasi and acquired a fair knowledge in Sanskrit. Later he became a Tambiran of the Tiruvannamalai Aadhinam. It is from his clan Sri la Sri Arumukha Naavalalar hailed. His writings became the target of our Yogi's attack, as his expositions got derailed. An article which deals with the refutation of our Yogi forms part of the festschrift published by the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam, to commemorate our Yogi.¹⁸

5. 'Eduththu' ennum sollukku itta Vairakkuppaayam

According to our Yogi, Gnaanappirakaasar had misunderstood the meaning of the word "Eduththu" occurring in the Siddhiyaar verse which begins thus : "Ennai ip pavatthil...."

The word Vairakkuppaayam means : 'a *mail* of adamant.' In this prose work, our Yogi condemns the misinterpretation of Gnaanapirakaasar and demonstrates the validity of the following facts. (1) Meykanda Deva is the guru of Arull Nandi as the latter says : "Meikandaan nool Senniylk-ondu (I keep on my crest the opus of Meikandaan). (2) As Arull Nandi uses the work "arulinaale" (by grace), Meikandaar is his Dikshaaguru (3) It is Meikandaar who taught Arull Nandi the work, as Arull Nandi says : "Eduththu Sitthathe Vaitthu-th- thaalinaicchoottum" (He was pleased to bless me by placing a foot of his on my crest.").

6. Siddhanta Marabu Kandana Kandanam

Siddhanta Marabu is a work indited by a person who was attached to the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam. It is not a very commendable work. So, someone condemned it outright. However, our Yogi was not happy about the condemnation. He was forced to condemn the work of condemnation. Why should our Yogi do this? This is a germane question. The answer is that it was no concern of the Yogi to defend the work 'Siddhanta Marabu.' Yet he did not want that work to suffer condemnation of passages which did not deserve condemnation. The article by Dr. S. Gangadaran on this work is commendable.¹⁹

Works translated by the Yogi

1. Siddhanta-p-Pirakaasikai

The original work in Sanskrit is by Sarvaatma-Sambu Sivaachaarya. Our Yogi had great admiration for this scholar. Indeed our Yogi quotes him with authority in his Maa-Paadiyam.

The original work serves as a hand-book on Saiva Siddhanta. Though works like Ramanatha Deepika and Madhyaarjunesa Deepika are also manuals, our Yogi chose to translate the Siddhanta-p-Pirakaasikai, as in his opinion this was the best among the manuals. This work deals with tattvas, their evolutes, adhvas, their role, diksha and its kinds, essential features of Saiva Aagamas etc. S. Kalyanasundara Iyear, son of Dr. U. Ve. Swaminatha Iyer published the translation of our Yogi in 1947.²⁰

2. Sloka Panchakam

The original Sanskrit verse is known as Sloka Panchakam or Pancha Ratna Maalika. As the title itself suggests, the work is in five slokas. The author is Hara Datta. According to Siva Sri Arunai Vadivel Mudaliyaar the translation as done by our Yogi, was for a different purpose. Our Yogi, it is obvious, did not translate the Sloka Panchakam into five independent Tamil verses. Indeed the Tamil version is in *akaval*, the form of which is that of a running narrative. So, we should probe into the method adopted by our Yogi. The point is this. The Yogi had to explicate the illustrative verse (Adhikarana 2, Sutra 1) which affirms the supremacy of Siva. He should establish that it is Siva and not Vaasudeva who is the supreme deity. This is already established by Hara Datta. So the Yogi merely wanted to incorporate the arguments advanced by Hara Datta in this connection, and achieved his object by including all the arguments in a simple verse. We have already given in English a translation of Yogi's translation, in chapter 5.

3. Siva-Tattva-Vivekam

The original work in Sanskrit is by Appayya Dikshitar. The work is also called Sikarini Maalai. The work is in two parts. The first is concerned with the message of such upanishads like Atharvasika, Swethaaswatara, Atharvasiras, Kaivalya, Brahadaaranya, Maandukya etc. The second part deals with Itihaasas, Purannas, Smritis, Bhagawad Gita etc. All scriptures aver that it is Siva who is the Supreme God. The original text of Siva-Tattva-Vivekam is in sixty verses. Our Yogi's translation is made up of 70 verses. The first seven verses form the proem, the succeeding 60, the text and the concluding three, the fruit yielded by a devout perusal of the work.

NOTES

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3. Somesar Muthu Mozhi Venpaa, Commentary by U. Mahadcv Mudaliyaar, The S.I.S.S.W. Publishing Society, Tirunelvely Ltd., 1921.
4. Kalaisai-p-Pathitruppatthu Antaati, edited by T.S. Meenaakshisundaram Pillai, Sri Venkateswar Press, Kumbakonam, 1951.
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7. Item 1, Pages 75 - 78.
8. Ilakkana Swamikall ennum Srimad Mutthukkumara Tambiran Ninaivu Malar, Kalaa Nilaiya Pathippakam Jaffna, 1958.
9. Tiruvekambar Antaati, edited by T.S. Meenaakshisundaram Pillai, Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadheenam, 1967.
10. Tarka Sangraham (Nyaaya Bhodini etc.,) translated by Vidwan Sivaananda Aiyar, Kokkuvil, Sothidappirakaasa Acchuyantira Saalai - 1910.
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15. Saivism in Philosophical Perspective by Dr. K. Sivaraman, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1973.
16. Sivagnaana Siddhiyaar - Moolamum Mutthiah Pillai Ezhuthiya Pozhippurai Mutaliyanavum, Kaaraikkudi Oozhiyan press, 1926 (Second Edition).

17. Sivagnaana Siddhiyaar Supakkam; Tiruvilankam Averkall Ezhuthiya Putthurai, Jaffna, 1925.
18. Item 1, pages 179 - 185.
19. Ibid., pages 186-191.
20. Siddhanta-p-Pirakaasikai published by S. Kalyanasundara Iyer, Kabeer Printing Works, Madras - 1947.



9. The Place of Sivagnaana Yogi in Tamil Letters

He indeed is a poet who admires the true poets, and in turn, is admired by true poets. Of Shakespeare, Milton said :

"Dear son of memory, great heir of Fame
What need'st thou.....?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment,
And so sepulchr'd in such pomp dost lie,
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die."

Of Milton, Wordsworth said : "Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart...." As the Tamil dictum says: "The learned admire the learned" (Katraarai-k- Katraare Kaamuruvar).

R.B. Martin, in his biography of Tennyson, relates a remarkable episode. When Tennyson passed away, he was buried with due honour. He was not alone in his bier. A copy of Shakespeare's Cymbeline was his companion.¹ In this connection we can affirm with greater pride that our Yogi stood unique in his devotion to scholarship. So long as he was alive, he wore on his neck well-cut palm-leaves in which was indited Sivappirakaasa Swami's *Naalvar Naanmani Maalai*, strung into his *Kandikai* (garland of rudraaksha beads)².

Our Yogi, a great admirer of scholars, is admired by scholars, in particular Tamilologists, the world over. Even during his life time, our Yogi became the idol of his chelas. They literally burned incense in his presence. Tottikkalai Madurakavi Srimad Subramaniya Munivar, a chela of our Yogi, installed an icon of our Yogi in the Sannidi Mantapam of Chidambaresar's temple at Tottikkalai and offered *archana* and *neivedya* to the icon³. One of his verses, in praise of our Yogi's greatness, is as follows :

"His visage rains mercy; his forehead is adorned
With the holy ash; his ripe lips charm beholders;
He is glorious renunciation; his bosom is
The abode of patience; his *manam* parts not

From Siva's flower-feet; his form is Gnosis
 From which they that cultivated him, never part ;
 He is Sivagnaana Munivar of ever-glorious
 Turasai; we enshrine his flower-feet
 In our bosom, crown and chanting tongue, for ever."

An old verse, said to have been composed by Talikai Namasivaaya Desikar who was attached to the Tiruvaavaduthurai Aadhinam during the reign of the 16th pontiff, sizes up the greatness of our Yogi in a single verse. Its message is as follows : "He abides in goodly Turasai (Tiruvaavaduthurai) and bears the name Sivagnaana Yogi. Out of mercy, he indited for the divine opus Sivagnaana Bhodam, two commentaries (the lesser and the greater) for the delectation of the learned. The erudite hail him as Siva Himself, as he was a master of the scriptures and was endowed with wisdom that was perfect." This verse makes it plain that the Yogi's greatness rests on his two commentaries. This indeed is the truth. The value of this truth will surface up only after some painstaking investigation.

We have in chapter 3 set out in detail the facts relating to the Indian commentatorial tradition. All bhaashyas were written in Sanskrit only. The bhaashyakaaras followed a well-settled paradigm. Each one's aim was to establish the inviolability of his own faith. He would strain every nerve of his to destroy his enemy's faith. So, the bhaashyakaara should be one who is unvanquishable. He should be a disputant par excellence. For this reason he should have cultivated logic in depth. In Tamil Nadu 'Logic' was never assigned a high place in the religious scheme. In fact there was no book in Tamil on Logic till the advent of our Yogi. He too but translated a standard Sanskrit work on Logic. Anyway he had supplied a felt want. Not only that. By his Tamil transcreation of Tarka Sanghrahā and Annam Bhattiya, he had convinced himself of his valiancy in disputation. The great work Sivagnaanaabhodam was by its very nature a work whose multifoliate splendour could be best brought out only in a bhaashya. St. Meykandaar himself has furnished all basic data on which a bhaashya can be structured. Each sutra of the Sivagnaanaabhodam is an ex cathedra declaration of truth. It contains two or more adhikaranas. An adhikarana is formulated like an argument. It comprises (1) Vishaya--the proposition, (2) Samsaya -- the doubt or objections, (3) *Purvapaksha* -- the prima - facie presentation of the theory to be considered, (4) *Siddhanta* -- the correct and unassailable conclusion or finding and (5) Sankati -- the sequence in argument. When this type of approach is adhered to, syllogistic reasoning automatically comes in its wake. For our Yogi the whole process was child's play. He so indited his bhaashya that it emerged out

as a flawless opus of marvel. The Yogi was a wizard with words. He could use them with telling effect. He was a great grammarian. In his exposition the rules of grammar were ever on his side. He was always circumspect. He could never be caught unawares. It is qualities as these that went into the making of the Yogi's bhaashya.

In this context we desire to place before the reader a very vital piece of information. We have stated supra that the Yogi was a great admirer of Sivappirakaasa Swami. This Swami was a chela of Velli Ambala Tambiran of the Dharmapuram Aadhinam. The founder-pontiff of this Aadhinam, namely St. Gurugnaana Sambandhār wrote a great opus called Gnaanaavarana Vilakkam. Velli Ambala Tambiram wrote a wonderful bhaashya for this work. It is truly a work of great merit. Yet this bhaashyaa -- obviously the earlier one --, does not have a reputation matching Yogi's bhaashya. Again, Velli Ambala Tambiran's bhaashya on St. Gurugnaanasambandhar's Mutthi Nicchayam is a remarkable commentary. Even this is not to be compared with our Yogi's Maa Paadiyam. The reason is not far to seek. Our Yogi's bhaashya is everywhere informed by logic. Our Yogi's exploitation of epistemology is unique. His statements are invulnerable and his dicta are irrefutable. Our Yogi, to speak the plain truth, is the one and only Tamil Bhaashyakaara. His fame solidly rests on his Maa-Paadiyam. His Sitrurai is also a commentary sui generis. It is indeed the text-book on Saiva Siddhanta. Our Yogi celaua sans dire, is the official interpreter of Saiva Siddhanta.

We have, in chapter 2, mentioned the salient features of Saiva Siddhanta. The meaning of *advaita* as posited by St. Meykandaar is unique. St. Taayumaanavar hails St. Meykandaar as the one and only sage who had correctly interpreted the word *advaita*. The observation of St. Taayumaanavar is significant. Advaita as posited by Meykandaar has nothing to do with the advaita as posited by Shankara Bhagawad Paada. Our Yogi swears by the meaning attached to the word *advaita* by St. Meykandaar. Ever-wakeful and never careless, our Yogi goes about his defence of St. Meykandaar's views in a superb way. The very name Meykandaar is supremely significant. He is described as 'the one that could point at the false, make possible its removal and point at the true or the real of the nature of Intelligence and Bliss.'⁴

St. Meykandaar arrived at his interpretation of *advaita* by a close scrutiny of the Vedas and the Aagamas. He does not straightway quote any passage from the Aagama or the Veda in support of his view. He just gives his interpretation of the Veda and argues that his view is infallible. Impressed by the irreproachable dicta of St. Meykandaar, our Yogi goes

all out to defend Meykandaar. He does it ably and at the same time most convincingly. In this connection the reader will do well to cultivate the brochure named 'Athuvitha Vaakkiya-th-Thelivurai'.⁵ In this booklet are collected the writings of the Yogi which relate to the word/concept 'advaita', from various sources. It is now well settled that advaita according to Saiva Siddhantam is a concept peculiar to Aagamic Saivism and that any view that runs counter to the one posited by Saiva Siddhantam, cannot pass muster. For such fixity of concept, it is to be said, that our Yogi is responsible.

Poesy in Tamil is fourfold, they being *Asu* (impromptu composition), *Mathura* (mellifluous versification), *Vistaara* (elaborate inditing) and *Chitra* (pictorial poetry). Our Yogi is all these four rolled into one. Only a few of his improvised verses are extant. Yet these reveal the traits of our Yogi with a vividness at once direct and forceful. Examples of mellifluous lines can be culled from all his poetical outpourings. These make a sweet ingress into the ears, proceed through the inner sensorium the while cleansing it and eventually merge with the soul as its sustaining strength. Our Yogi's Kaanchi Puranam establishes that he is a Vistaara Kavi. The greatest of his disciples was Kaachiyappar. It was he who wrote the second part of Kaanchi Puranam. He also indited a few Sthala Puranams. The Chitra Kavi in our Yogi is revealed in his Kaanchi Puranam. Samples of these are included in Appendix-B.

Even though the Yogi was celebrated for his scholarship and attainments in his own day, he was not without his denigrators, then or now. Each of these had an axe to grind. The Yogi, no doubt cannot be admired for his condemnation of the Ilakkana Vilakkam. We have touched on this subject, in the previous chapter. Our Yogi had been unjustly criticised even by great persons. In the Daily called Dinamani appeared an article called "Sivagnaanabhodam Aaraanji Chootthira Aaraaicchi" on 06.12.1935.⁶ This article was authored by the great patriot Va.Vu. Chidambaram Pillai. He attacks our Yogi and says that the Yogi has misinterpreted the work '*Asat*'. He even uses harsh words in his criticism. A careful scrutiny of the sutra in question will reveal the fact that the interpretation of our Yogi is impeccable. The great patriot Va.Vu. Chidambaram Pillai was a Vedanti. He too brought out an edition of the Sivagnaanabhodam in his light.⁷ He should have remembered that the work dealt with by him was a Saiva Siddhanta opus.

In 1922 appeared a work entitled *Naalaam Varunaatthu Naishtikarukkanrik Kirukattarukkuk Kurutthuvamindru endru Vilakkiya Kaami-*

*kappporull Maruppaakiya Sootthira Kirakasthaachaariya Maruppu*⁸. It is a pamphlet in thirty-nine pages. Its importance is without bounds.

Chidambaram Mutthu Karpakatthu Ayya, Natesa Ayya and others caused the publication of a brochure called "*Kirakattaachaariya Niranayam*" and began to propagate ideas contrary to those that are affirmed by our Yogi in his Maa- Paadiyam. The mischief that was sought to be achieved by investing guruship in persons who are disentitled to become gurus, is attacked with a vehemence that is truly born of devotion to the Aagamas and the writings that follow the Aagamas, in particular, the Maha Bhaashya of our Yogi. The monograph ably defends our Yogi and debunks his denigrators. Those were days when Sivagnaana Tirutthali at Chidambaram functioned with extraordinary zeal and set itself to the task of setting straight any deviation that took place, wittingly or unwittingly, from the discipline of Saiva Siddhantam. The work under consideration, refers to the Maa- Paadiyam as a vast area of arable land. In a modicum of this area, so says the work, seeds of Kaamikaagama were sown. They sprouted into fertile crops. These crops were sought to be crowded out of existence by tares mischievously introduced thereinto by the impious. So the work of weeding out had to be done with promptitude.

One of the chief denigrators of our Yogi is Pulavar Somasundaram of Ranipettai. He published in 1992 a book called "*Periyor Seytha Perum Pizhaikall : 1. Sivagnaana Munivar-Mutal Pakuti*".⁹ It is to be mentioned in this context that this Pulavar was all admiration for our Yogi in 1985. This is well established by the Pulavar's two articles which appeared later in 1986 in the festschrift relating to our Yogi.¹⁰ However in 1992, he chose to attack our Yogi and produced the above - mentioned monograph. We have carefully gone through the Pulavar's work. It is, in the main, nothing but an exercise in stultification. He inculcates our Yogi as one who affirms the differences that subsist between caste and caste, forgetting that the Yogi but affirms what is already affirmed by the Aagamas, times without number. The Pulavar, it is seen, is dead to the dictum of St. Sekkizhaar which says : "*Saathikall Neriyl Tappa*" (Castes deviate not from their settled course). Again what is asserted by the Pulavar at page 25 stands cancelled by what he asseverates at pages 43 and 66. At any rate, consistency does not appear to be the Pulavar's virtue. The very nature of the Pulavar's work cried for a refutation which appeared in 1993.¹¹ This work is worth its weight in gold and diamond. This should be cultivated in depth. Seventeen are the chapters of this work and each one is a mine of information. The facts and arguments advanced by the author are admirably authentic.

In 1993 appeared Prof. Vai. Murukesan's *Meikandaar Aruliya Sivagnaanabhodamum Vilakka Uraiyum*¹². When the author requested Siva Sri Arunai Vadivel Mudaliyaar -- an acknowledged congnoscente of Saiva Siddhantam --, to bless his work with a Foreword, Sri Mudaliyaar expressed through a letter, his regret at his inability to do so. The letter containing the regret is printed at pages 73-76 of this work. The contents of the letter go to show that the Professor's criticisms levelled against the Yogi are absolutely unfounded. The Professor's work too has attracted a refutation and this appeared in 1994.¹³ This work of refutation is truly a labour of love. Its author, whose devotion to the Yogi, knows no bounds, has literally pommelled the Professor. The author is already very much respected for his writings. His latest work is one more feather to his cap. This work is celebrated for its lucidity, authenticity and unimpeachable dependability.

As our Yogi was a polemist, he would ever be a target of attack of other polemicists. Yet no amount of writing against him, can ever cause any dent on him. He was truly a great Yogi. His state of beatitude is best described in the words of Oliver Goldsmith.

"As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."¹⁴

The Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, held a three-day Seminar on our Yogi during March, 1986. The Director of the Institute did well to bring out, in print, the proceedings of the Seminar as volume nineteen of Indian Philosophical Annual.¹⁵ This comprises nine articles in Tamil and nine in English. This volume contains a fair assessment of the Yogi's place in Tamil Letters.

The methodology of the Yogi's commentary is, now a days, studied in depth at home and abroad. Sri P. Krishnan's paper on 'The Hermeneutics of Gadamer and Sivagnana Munivar' is a useful contribution. Gadamer's 'Truth and Method' and our Yogi's Maa-Paadiyam are taken up for discussion. "Gadamer's effort consists in the philosophical legitimisation of the claim to truth of the human sciences by making a profound investigation of the phenomenon of human understanding particularly of art, philosophy and history." Gadamer shows that (1) the understanding of the human sciences is determined by the object disclosed in them and not by the subjective attitudes, that (2) in all understanding, history is effective and that (3) the object of understanding is mediated only through language. That an investigation into the Yogi's concept of understanding

vis a vis Gadamer's Hermeneutics is productive of extraordinary perceptions, is a fact which is gaining ground in modern times. A study of Yogi's methodology only proves that valid methods can never become obsolete.

It is said that no one after the advent of St. Sekkizhaar has been able to cultivate the Tevaaram hymns except through him.¹⁷ Same is the truth about Saiva Siddhantam after the advent of our Yogi. If among the Saiva Aadhinams, the Tiruvaavaduthurai has about it a peculiar glory, it is owing to the fact that our Yogi belonged to this Aadhinam. Saiva Siddhantam as interpreted by the Yogi holds the field. His exposition is fruitful in two effective ways. The learner's doubts are removed and he gains clarity which suffers not obscurity even as time passes on. In this connection we bring to the notice of the readers Dr. Vai. Iratthina Sabhapathy's work '*Sivagnaana Munivar Nokkil Saiva Siddhantam*.'¹⁸ We are not drawing the long bow when we conclude thus. Our Yogi is *Saiva Siddhantam in human form*.

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Appendix - A

The Decad of Akilaanda Naayaki

1. By Sanchita, Praarabda and Aagaamiya
And by nexus with ephemeral evolutes of Maya,
I -- the Sinner --, undergo interminable embodiments
And swirl and swirl.
You deem my flaws, even my flaws, to be virtuous
And reveal to me commensurate with my mellowness
Your forms divine, lift me out of the cycle of birth
And death, and rule me, O Mother of Virtue!
I know not when You will choose to cause me
Quaff the flood of abundant bliss and poise me
In such beatitude. You are the heavens, the earth
And all else! You are the four unknown Vedas!
You are the expanse of macro-and-mega-cosms!
You fare forth boundlessly even beyond them!
O Sea of gracious Gnosis! O Opulence of *Raasai*!
O Majesty yclept Akilaanda Naayaki!

Sanchita : Stored Karma. Praarabda : Karma which is experienced.

Aagaamiya : Karma which gets accumulated. Raasai : The village known as Rajavallipuram. Yclept : called.

2. Some are stony-hearted : some roll like wheels
All over and ultimately stand fatigued ;
Some shout and shout daily like ghouls that are
Fettered to trees ; some grow languorous hankering
After the joy of belles whose foreheads are curved bows ;
Like a dog that masticates a dry bone
And licks the blood flowing from its punctured gums,
Some taste the indescribable sorrows of the world
And deem them to be delightful! Lo, You drew me
From the company of these, cured my quaking,
Removed from me the manifold murk and plunged me
To abide for ever in the flood of bliss.

O Sea of gracious Gnosis! O Opulence of Raasai!
O Majesty yclept Akilaanda Naayaki!

3. When the physical body is cast away
Like the serpent's skin, unto life's subtle body
Is fastened *Yaatana* body and is fed to flames;
Again smelted copper is poured on it;
Into the eyes are driven heated needles;
Then in manifold hells, the soul is made
To undergo misery for ages; if ever the punished
Should rear aloft the head, that will be
Smashed flat. Thus they do, the messengers of Yama!
You did not betray me to them.
O Sea of gracious Gnosis! O Opulence of Raasai!
O Majesty yclept Akilaanda Naayaki!

Yaatana body : The body fitted to the soul to undergo the torments of Hell. Yama : The God of Death.

4. Like verdigris in copper, *Aanava Mala* abides
Beginninglessly in me ; like eyes covered by murk
I, in my *Kevala* state, lay unconscious of aught.
Babes and blind persons, owing to their plight
Seek milk and sticks to walk with; these are to them
Given by persons interested in them.
When I sought, egged on by *Aanava Mala*, *Maya*
And *Karma*, You too gave me these.
Then like a wheel, like a top, I -- the great sinner --,
In my *Sakala* state -- the maelstrom of transmigration --,
Swirled and swirled! O for the day, when freed
Of devastating *Aanava*, *Karma*, *Maya* and *Desire*,
I should know of You, reach the shade of Your beauteous
And golden feet, quaff bliss and become THAT!
O Sea of gracious Gnosis! O Opulence of Raasai!
O Majesty yclept Akilaanda Naayaki!

Kevala : The state in which the bodiless soul languishes under the grip of *Aanava Mala*.

Sakala : The embodied state.

5. I was caught by the ghoul -- the hoary *Aanava Mala* --,
And fettered by the bewildering snake of *Karma*.
I fell into the boundless sea of transmigration;
I lay immersed in the eddy of *Desire*;
On one side I was eaten away by sharks --

- The fulgorant damozels --;
 I was pulled to pieces by crocodiles -- the five senses -- ;
 Thus I languished and languished.
 I see no Palladium save Your auric and lotus-like feet!
 Alas, I am false! Yet, O Mother of worlds,
 Do not forsake me ; be pleased to rule me, -- even me!
 O Sea of gracious Gnosis the billows of which
 Roll far beyond the bournes of the vault of heaven!
 O Opulence of Raasai! O Majesty yclept Akilaandam!
6. Music and its modes, words and their meanings,
 Murk and light, extending joy and misery,
 Heaven and hell, lives innumerable different
 And springing from base matrices,
 The four Vedas and their tools of instruction,
 All the billowy seas, mountains and the eight
 Directions, the sun and the moon, numberless faiths,
 The inaccessible worlds galore and their gods :
 "All these are but a division of the tranquil
 And supernal (Ether - Consciousness)". So you did
 Me instruct and set me in that realm of Wisdom.
 O Sea of gracious Gnosis! O Opulence of Raasai!
 O Majesty yclept Akilaanda Naayaki!
7. I am, so long as You are ; since the time you and I
 Abide, You have for me inalienable compassion;
 Yet, how is it that I am companied with malas?
 How in my *Kevala* state, did I come by
 An embodiment? If this be the gift of Karma,
 How could have Karma ensued without body?
 I was steeped in senseless *Kevala*; so no karma
 Could issue from me. If to cure me
 Of my nescience, You chose to grant me a body,
 Then, how came I to be embodied
 Before even I underwent joy or misery flowing
 From twyfold Karma? Be pleased to clarify this.
 O Sea of gracious Gnosis! He is beyond the vault
 Of heaven and the bournes of worlds galore!
 Unbeknown to the Vedas, He stays lofty and ubiquitous!
 He is Agniswarar -- Your Consort! O Opulence
 Of Raasai! O Majesty yclept Akilaanda Naayaki!

8. Why, this day, am I so much to this body attached?
 If this be Your doing, then whenever I get
 Embodied, this desire should characterise me.
 If this be my nature, then that desire should
 Bind me for ever in all my embodiments -- boundless
 Like the sea! If it be said that it arises
 When the pursuance of Aanava Mala is a trifle
 Pushed back, then who is it that causes
 Such pushing? If this be Your doing, then You
 Should do it for all the flawed lives.
 If it be I that do it or if mala itself gives way,
 Then why should I hail you at all?
 O One imperishable, be pleased to clarify this!
 He gutted with fire the three destructive citadels!
 He is Agniswarar -- Your Consort! O Sea
 Of gracious Gnosis! O Opulence of Raasai!
 O Majesty yclept Akilaanda Naayaki!
9. "Moksha is union with women; it is death
 Of *ganda*-s; it is annihilation
 Of the three *guna*-s; it is death of Karma;
 It is the end of the three malas; it is
 The acquisition of an athanasic body;
 It is ratiocinating discrimination;
 It is death of being-ness; it is the acquirement
 Of occult powers; it is to become senseless
 Like a stone." Thus, even thus is the thinking
 Of the bewildered souls'. You have annulled
 My three malas and placed on my crown
 Your lotus - feet ever-abounding in Grace!
 You have claimed my life, body and possessions
 And granted to me -- a mere cur --, the Bliss
 Of Moksha! O Sea of gracious Gnosis! O Opulence
 Of Raasai! O Majesty yclept Akilaandam!
10. "The five elements are the true ones; the five
 Sensory instruments are the true ones;
 Manam and the inner instruments are the true ones;
 The evolutes of Maya are the true ones; it is
 The pure Maya that is the true one; the Creator is
 The true one; it is Vishnu that slumbers
 On the snake, is the true one." Thus, even thus,
 Men on earth confuse one another. It is

Like the search of the blind assembly for light.
They but get caught in the eddy
Of transmigration; they canst not know the truth.
Can they? Oh, You are before and behind,
On the sides, above and below; breaking the very vault
Of heaven, You pervade everywhere;
You are without beginning, middle or end;
You rule me -- a mere cur --, never from me parting.
O Sea of gracious Gnosis! O Opulence of Raasai!
O Majesty yclept Akilaanda Naayaki!

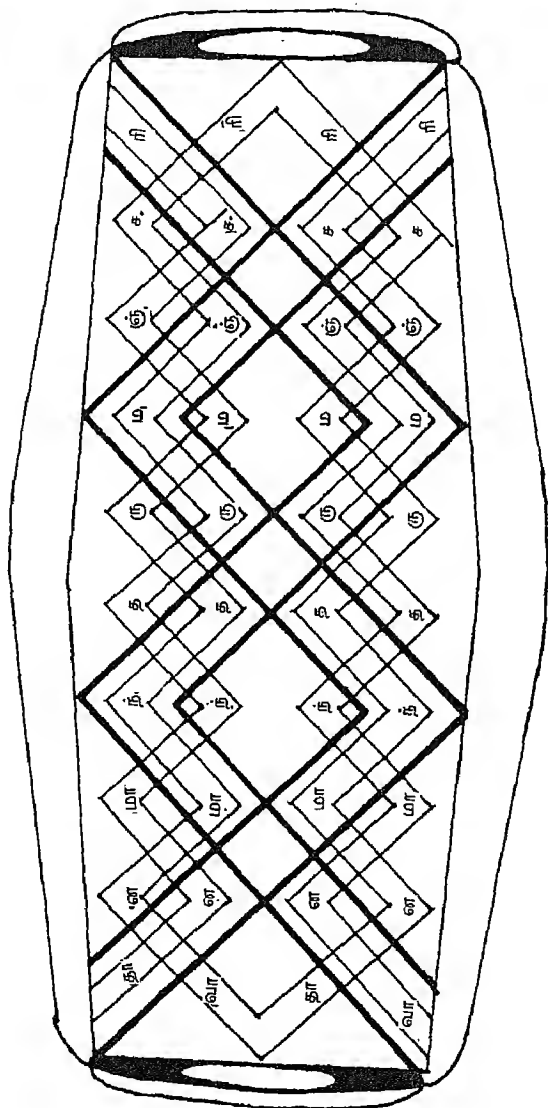
Appendix - B

Samples of the Yogi's Chitra - Kavis

(Reproduced from Kaanchi Puranam edited by Siva Sri Arunai Vadivel
Mudaliyaar, 1937.)

முரசு பந்தம்

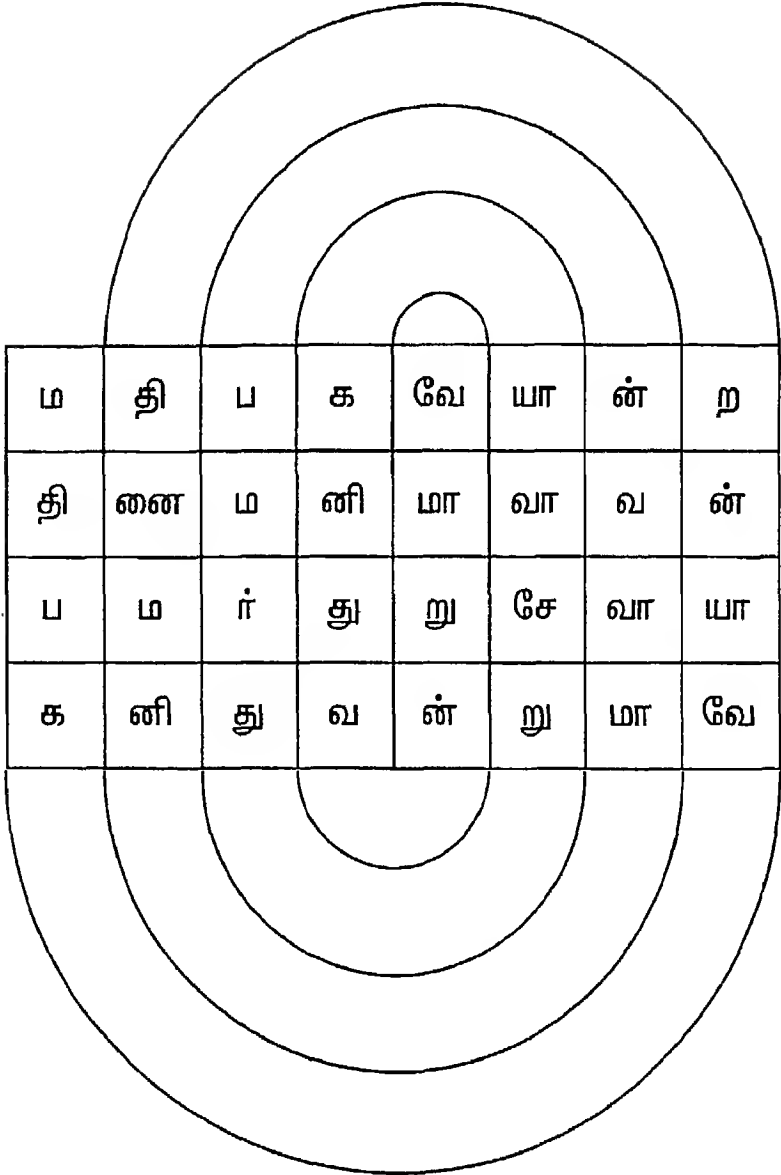
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சுருப்பதோ பத்திரம்

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| வா | யா | டே | மா | மா | டே | யா | வா |
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| வா | யா | டே | மா | மா | டே | யா | வா |
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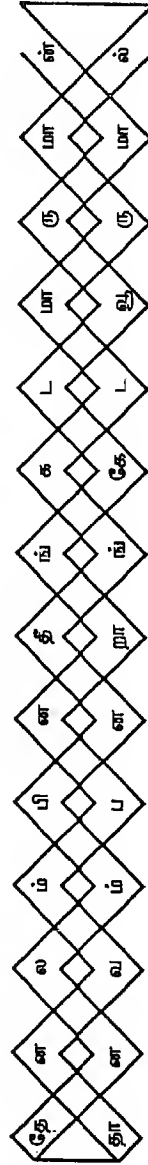
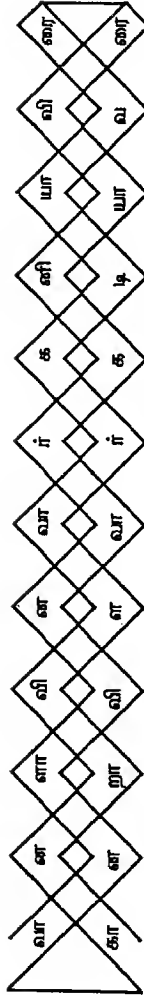
காஞ்சிப் புராணம்
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| ப | ம | ர் | து | று | சே | வா | யா |
| க | னி | து | வ | ன் | று | மா | வே |

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The sculpture reproduced on the end paper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King Suddhodana the dream of Queen Maya, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

From : Nagarjunakonda, 2nd century A.D.

Courtesy : National Museum, New Delhi.